



EDWARD
REYNOLDS



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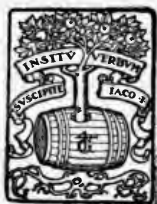


Alice

EDWARD REYNOLDS

BY

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To

JAMES KERR

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CHAPTER I.

“Well!”

As the girl spoke, she glanced with flashing eyes into the face of her companion.

“Please, Alice, don’t annihilate me. In what have I offended you?”

When a woman is angry with a man, she is seldom mollified by being informed that her wrath is without foundation in reason. It is unpardonable to imply, much less to assert, that the gentler sex displays temper without sufficient provocation.

“I just don’t care *that*, Mr. Reynolds,” emphasizing “that” by a vehement snap of the thumb and forefinger.

The “Mr. Reynolds” affected not to notice the small regard in which his opinions were held, and walked on in silence by the side of the excited girl. It was the first exhibition of temper since the days of their childish misunderstandings. It was the day of all days when peace and good-will should

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prevail among men—Christmas Day, 1848, and the parties to the quarrel belonged to the patrician class of quaint, old Philadelphia society.

Alice Richards had scarcely passed the threshold of woman's domain, her tiny feet all-reluctant to cross the borderland of womanhood. She was but fifteen years of age. Yesterday, in fact an hour ago, she had been a girl in fancy, thought, being; now, she was a woman. Shocks produce these changes.

What would we not give—we, who have been tossed and tumbled by the angry *to* and *fro* of life's struggles—to creep back and rest, ever so brief a time, in those arms once more—childhood's arms, that are rent asunder with such pitiless force, while the trustfulness of all the happy, holy peace of youth and innocence is pushed bodily out into the full glare of sinister, relentless sham and deception! Out of what wide eyes one looks for the first time upon the meanness and littleness of just common, every-day life.

Alice had started from home to purchase a present for a young friend, that had been forgotten the day before, and was debating earnestly as she walked, or rather ran, upon the gift that would delight its future possessor most. Girl fashion, she finally paused in front of an attractive display window and began studying the exhibition intently, with a view of settling the ques-

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tion of purchase by the suggestions prompted by the thoughtfulness of enterprising shopkeepers.

Others were evidently doing likewise. Among the number were a detective and a small boy. The detective was standing close to the lad, and had succeeded in engaging him in conversation.

"What did Santa Claus do for you?" inquired the detective, patronizingly.

"There hain't no Santa Claus," replied the boy.

"Oh! Isn't there?"

"No."

"Yes, there is, too."

"Our mamma and papa is Santa Claus."

"Come off, you're wrong. Anyway, what did your 'papa' and 'mamma' Santa Claus put in your stocking?"

The boy made no answer.

"I'll bet you didn't get a thing," continued the questioner.

"My mamma and papa are dead," said the boy, at last, in a husky, choked voice.

Alice had stopped so close to the two that she overheard the latter part of the conversation. Involuntarily she glanced at the youth, and, despite his rags, her heart was touched by his sadness.

"Look here now, how does that read?" inquired the detective, pointing at a placard to which was secured a jack-knife.

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"This knife offered by Santa Claus for twenty-five cents," promptly read the boy aloud.

"You read well. Can you write?"

"Why, of course," assented the boy.

"Yes, you can," replied the man, skeptically.

"Well, I can."

"Let me see," continued the detective, producing a pencil and tablet, "write twenty-five cents."

The boy took the pencil and book extended toward him and unsuspectingly wrote, "25 cents."

"Write—well, for instance, write—chicken."

The boy wrote "chikin."

The man watched closely the exercise upon which the lad was employed. Finally, the boy glanced up into the man's face. As he did so, a piece of paper was shoved before his eyes.

"Did you write that?" demanded the detective.

The look of pleasure in the lad's eyes in parading his attainments suddenly changed to one of horror and dismay.

"You are my prisoner," said the officer, seizing the boy by the shoulder.

"Please, sir, what has he done?"

The detective turned abruptly and met the questioning eyes of the girl, and replied respectfully: "He has been stealing chickens."

"Chickens!" The detective smiled at the sudden revulsion in the girl's face. "He looks so young

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and innocent," commented the girl turning once more to the boy, "it seems impossible. Don't arrest him to-day. Maybe he will do better in the future," she pleaded, "maybe," she continued, glancing again at the up-turned face of the boy—into eyes that shrank not from her steady gaze, "maybe he did not take them."

"He won't deny it, miss. Didn't you take a chicken from Farmer Jones' coop last Saturday night?" questioned the man of the boy.

The boy made no answer.

"Why don't you tell him? Answer," whispered the girl, stepping nearer.

Still there was no response.

"See! He admits it; or, at least, does not deny the charge," justified the officer. "Come with me," and he gave the boy a push.

The girl glided forward, drawn by some irresistible impulse.

"Did you—did you—" she could not speak the word *steal*. "Did you take the chickens?" she asked, obstructing their progress.

"I *took* one chicken, yes."

The officer smiled, cynically. The girl, who had for the first time come in contact with crime, turned in a dazed manner and walked away. She heard the lad pleading with the officer, the tones growing angry and loud. She walked rapidly to pass beyond the contending voices. Suddenly a small

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object darted before her. It was the boy—and, yes—the detective, also.

“Show her the letter,” cried the lad, his face aflame, and eyes dilating, “and I will go.” It was with no gentle hand that the man grabbed the boy and drew him aside. “I never stole in all my life,” protested the boy, looking straight into the eyes of the unknown girl.

“What!” exclaimed Alice.

“Show her the letter,” reiterated the lad. “Let someone in all the world think me honest.”

“Have you a letter, sir?” asked the girl, addressing the lad’s captor.

“Yes, you may read it,” placing in her hands a piece of ordinary wrapping paper with lead pencil writing upon it.

“Farmer Jones,” she read with difficulty, “you will find in this here leter 25 cents to pay for a chikin we took last saterday nite from your koop. it was for a sick woman. we sed we would pay you with the first money we ernald. we tried hard to get a chikin at the market but no one would let us have any and there was nothin else to do. the chikin wade 3 pounds dresed. we asked and found out the price what chikins is worth. we didn’t eat any ourselves and the woman is gettin better. its tuff to pay this money bout crismus time but maybe God would cause a relapes if we

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didn't do as we greed to. we hope we won't have to take any more of your poltry but if we do we'll settle cause it can't be helped.

"yours trulie,

"2 boys."

Alice handed the paper back to the officer, and stepping to the side of the small boy, took his little grimy hand in hers.

"I believe you," then turning to the officer, she asked, "What are you going to do with him?"

"Take him to the magistrate."

"What will the magistrate do with him?"

"Send him to jail or the reformatory."

"Oh, no, not to-day. Let him go home with me."

"If you were older and more experienced, I should be angry; but I am simply amused. What you ask is impossible."

"But I will pay for the chicken," producing her portemonnaie.

"There were eight chickens stolen in all," declared the detective. "He admits of taking but one."

"I didn't take but one either," cried the boy.

"Well, I will pay for the eight, only release him."

"Who are you?" inquired the officer, respectfully.

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Before she could reply, a young man stepped forward.

"Jack," he said, familiarly, addressing the officer, "yield to this young lady. Whatever sum is required, I undertake its discharge."

"Very well, Mr. Reynolds," replied the officer, obligingly.

The face and throat of the girl were crimson, then became white as snow. There was no approval in the newcomer's eyes. Her conduct was the source of displeasure. His face was stern, almost forbidding. She felt that he had been a silent spectator to all that had taken place, and came forward only to prevent the disclosure of her identity. The man, whose bride she was to become some day, had revealed his presence to spare the woman he was to wed publicity. There was a strange glittering light in the girl's eyes, and the lips were tightly compressed. Let consequences be as they might, her resolution was taken.

"I thank Mr. Reynolds for his proffered assistance," she said, deliberately, "but I cannot accept the obligation. You, sir," addressing the officer, "will either call at the residence of Banker Richards, whose daughter offers herself this boy's bondsman, for your money, or you shall have to keep the boy in custody, until he can be legally released."

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"Come on, here!" exclaimed the boy, pulling at the detective's coat, "I'm ready."

"Very well, Miss Richards," replied the officer, ignoring the efforts of the lad, "I will do as you desire," and politely touching his hat, the detective started to walk away, when he was arrested by the young lady with the remark that, perhaps, she had sufficient money with her to satisfy all claims. Upon being informed that three dollars would be required, she carefully told out the amount and the officer departed.

Edward Reynolds regarded the incident as ninety-nine men out of every hundred would have done. There are persons whose special business it is to do what the best interests of society demand for this unfortunate class. Interference of outside influences seldom, if ever, proves an advantage. Societies innumerable are formed with enlightened views concerning the reformation of young malefactors. There are humane judges and houses of correction; no end of money is raised and disbursed annually in all large cities to amend this increasing nuisance. True, the result of all these experiments is not as yet entirely satisfactory.

Here was an unsophisticated, tender-hearted girl the dupe and victim of one of this designing class. He had witnessed the entire transaction, thinking best not to let her know that he had been an observer of the weak defenses of her nature until it

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became necessary in his judgment to shield her name from the inquisitive columns of the press. He was prompted by the best of motives in the matter, and had his trouble for his pains; not an unusual reward for volunteers.

Alice had not failed to interpret the manifest displeasure, unquestionably produced by her conduct. She had considered Edward kind and sympathetic and now felt the resentment of the deceived. He was cold and cruel by nature; he would increase the burdens of the poor. Hero worship had ended. She had trusted and loved this tyrant. An analysis of her present feelings was very different. Thus they walked, with the boy a short distance in the rear, too occupied with their own thoughts to be communicative. Alice was conducting the lad home, by no means over-confident of his reception. She broke the silence finally with the opening word of this chapter.

"Come, Alice, let's make up. We must not break the peace to-day." The overture of reconciliation came from him.

"I'm not angry now."

"I'm greatly relieved," he replied, sincerely.

"Only," she commenced, "I've caught a glimpse of the other world—the one in which we do not live. Is it not strange there should be two worlds so near each other and yet so inaccessible. so wide apart?" she inquired.

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"By no means strange, Alice. Society is in a mixed and conglomerate state. Your sweet young life has been secluded and sheltered from contact with all but the best. These worlds, as you style them, are indeed so very remote from each other that the inhabitants of one are denied entrance to the other."

"But the boundaries, what fixes them?"

"Man."

"But God—is God the same in both these worlds?"

"Well, yes," he replied, "God is the refuge of all alike."

"Why, then, the social exclusion?"

"Because experience has demonstrated the wisdom of the system," he answered.

"I don't understand what you mean by the 'wisdom of the system,' " she admitted.

"Well," he proceeded, didactically, "you see every attempt that has been made to equalize society has utterly failed. Man is fitted for different spheres. Wealth, ability, refinement seek a social plane, while, on the other hand, poverty, depravity and ignorance occupy positions by themselves on a much inferior level. To undertake to destroy the lines between the two would demoralize society. The law of social economics is clearly understood and must not be undervalued. It often happens that men of most upright motives have

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used up the energies of lifetimes in trying to unite your two worlds together, with the sole result of endangering the security of each. To-day it has come to be regarded as unsafe to interfere except by the rigid enforcement of police regulations, which protects one of your worlds by repressing, through fear of severe penalties, the lawless encroachment of the other."

"How many men of prominence have been known to work for the advancement of the poorer classes?" inquired Alice, evidently startled by the arguments of her companion.

"Well," began Edward, hesitatingly, "the instances are not so numerous as you may think the case demands; but—well—the acknowledged failure of the efforts made is sufficient discouragement to prevent all but enthusiasts engaging in the labor."

"But suppose everyone," persisted Alice, "should do a little. Suppose you and I, and thousands similarly situated, just starting in life, should resolve to labor in behalf of the more unfortunate, surely some good would be accomplished."

"*You and I*," repeated the young man, aghast, "why, Alice, you should not permit the circumstance you have inadvertently witnessed to make such a deep impression upon your mind. Your young life is already unhappy. Promise not to let the mischief cloud more of this bright Christmas Day."

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They had arrived at the home of the girl, and Alice paused to permit the boy to enter the gate.

"Where in the name of the Seven Wonders have you been—*what have you there?*" It was a girlish voice, issuing from within the grounds.

"Mr. Reynolds is with me, Eleanore, and this boy." Alice's voice betrayed irritation, and Eleanore became suddenly discreet.

"Aren't you coming in?" inquired Eleanore of the young gentleman, as Alice marched away with the lad in the direction of the house, without further notice of the others present.

"She's in a dreadful huff," whispered Edward.

Here followed, much to Eleanore's amusement, a full description of what had preceded their arrival.

"Just like the dear child," exclaimed the girl, enthusiastically, "she is tender hearted, noble and just as good as she can be."

"She is only a child at best," declared Edward, "an impulsive child."

"At this point the conversation was interrupted by the re-appearance of Alice and the boy. The lad carried a large basket in his hand, and he marched past the gossipers, disdaining to glance in their direction.

"Come back to-morrow," cried Alice to the departing figure.

"Thank you," replied a voice near the basket.

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Then Alice discovered her friends, but did not approach them. Eleanore fled into the house, and Edward leisurely strolled to the side of the girl. Neither of them spoke at first, Alice watching the boy as he grew less and less in the distance, an unaccustomed look in her deep blue eyes.

"A penny for your thought," bargained Edward.

"What became of Eleanore?" she asked, trying heroically to throw off her depression.

"She went into the house."

"Come, I wish you to see my presents," said Alice, brightening.

"But tell me first, Alice dear, of what you were thinking," he persisted, taking her hands in his, firmly.

"Oh! It is gone now and forgotten," trying to disengage her hands.

"Not until you have told me," tightening his grasp, "it is a sad thought and I want to dispel it."

"I was wondering," said Alice, her eyes turning once more up the street the boy with the basket had taken, "to which of those worlds I belong—to yours, or to that boy's."

"I shall keep you, please God, in mine," he said fervently.

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CHAPTER II.

Two years at a seminary had passed Alice Richards into womanhood. In stature, just a trifle above medium height, supple, graceful, willowy. Whatever may be claimed for the contrary, girls at the age of sixteen are never handsome. There is something about that period that disguises, or, at least, masquerades. Two years ago, to have claimed for Alice that she was good looking might even have savored of exaggeration. She had given promise of no greater pretensions to the fair goddess's favors than the average girl.

Is she really, in the common vernacular, beautiful? Well, that depends. Hers was an intellectual face, but not the kind of intellectuality that sways and dominates the affections. The heart, the mind, the soul were reflected quickly into those sensitive, luminous features.

Fortunately, there is no iron-clad rule by which woman is adjudged beautiful or otherwise. What pleases one person may excite ridicule in another. The opinion of man differs as widely upon this most interesting subject as upon other matters. Consequently, there is seldom either man or woman but has some honest admirer. We have all seen faces

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faultlessly regular, endowed with complexions rivaling the transparent tint of sea-shell, crowned with masses of waving hair, and have greatly marveled that such pains should have been taken in displaying wares so cheap. Again, one is irresistibly drawn by an indescribable something in very common faces, the charm of which is as difficult of estimating as the faculties are of comprehending.

There was a rich color in Alice's face, enhanced by the white filmy dress which she wore. Edward Reynolds was coming to call upon her. It was the third time they had met since their return from college. In fact, within the last two years they had seen but little of each other. These two, who, since their first recollection had been betrothed, were in a way becoming comparative strangers. Alice at a finishing school, Edward at Yale, with a desultory correspondence, had not been the best calculated to retain, much less awaken, affection. Just when these two had become engaged, if there had ever been a formal engagement, neither could have told. When Alice was born, the disappointment at Banker Richards' was ill-concealed. The banker had desired a son and so far from consulting his wishes, he had been presented a daughter. He was confiding his parental trouble to his business associate and most intimate friend, John Reynolds, when the latter gentleman reminded him that he had a son, and that it should be

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no fault of his, if the two families were not more closely united by the advent of the little girl. From that hour there was a compact between the two houses. The children at an early age made the discovery of their future matrimonial disposition, and grew up well content to carry the arrangement into effect. Alice was fond of the big boy lover, and the big boy, five years her senior, even considered the matter far more seriously, and permitted his boyish regards to go out freely to his future bride. With a loyalty lacking in much older men, no other woman had been allowed to enter his mind. He contemplated marriage between Alice and himself as both a filial duty and a personal privilege. Coming home from college he was not prepared for the change in Alice. Instead of a wilful slip of a girl, he was confronting an incomparable creature, of whose loveliness he had never remotely conjectured. Upon beholding her, Edward was conscious of an inexperienced sensation, a new strange intoxication—a revelation that struck every chord into vibration. He had supposed that he already felt for Alice all the high regard and love that man is capable of feeling for woman.

The second day had passed at home, before he thought of calling to pay his respects to Alice. There had been so many things to talk over with father and mother; so many friends dropped in

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during the time, that the propriety of calling had not occurred. True, he was glad to go; it was so long since they had seen each other. There was, besides, an important subject that had better, perhaps, be discussed concerning their future happiness. It is not meet for man to live alone, and so far as he could see, there was no reason why an early date should not be fixed for the marriage. Before speaking to his parents upon the subject, he would mention the matter to her. It would be more delicate and considerate. Betty, the old colored servant ushered him into the familiar drawing room and hastened away, bearing his card to Miss Alice. This young lady had expected his visit the preceding day and was not in the most amiable mood, being half minded to send word that she was indisposed. She thought better of it, however, and her visitor was informed that "Miss Richards would be down directly." Edward was not at all nervous about the interview. The affair, in every way advantageous, had been settled by their parents and ratified in a way by themselves. The sound of rustling garments sent a thrill through him. With a smile upon his lips, he rose and turned to greet Alice with perfect ease—even sang-froid, then the smile vanished, and Edward was staring, actually staring at the woman before him, and a sudden fear—the fear born of love—rendered him speechless.

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He had held Alice loyally in his heart. He had always been chivalrous and deferential, as in duty bound he honored, but until this present moment he had never loved her. Now, with this sudden enthrallment—his heart passing irrevocably, he read in those eyes looking calmly into his own no answering sentiment.

“How beautiful!” he exclaimed, involuntarily, standing as though spellbound where he had risen.

“Unless you wish me to think the contrary,” she replied, smiling, “you had better shake hands.”

He took the proffered hand and held it, still feasting his eyes upon her face, resolving, as it were, all doubts in her mind as to his impression.

“Why, Alice, I hardly knew you,” he declared.

“Not greatly to be wondered at,” she replied, “it has been two years since we parted.”

“What a hope the future contains,” evidently relieved by the thought that there should be no more separation.

“Did you arrive home to-day?” she inquired, innocently.

“No, I came yesterday, or the day before,” he confessed. “Mother was arbitrary, friends called, time passed——”

“Oh, indeed, how delightful,” serenely.

Mr. and Mrs. Richards entered the room and the evening was spent in general conversation. Some-

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how, Alice felt disappointed in Edward. He seemed pre-occupied. She was aware of a certain reserve in his manner. His reticence troubled her. He, too, had come to feel the force of her words spoken at their parting two years ago. They did not belong to the same world.

Alice resolved to ask for her freedom; that the engagement be broken; that the fetters placed upon her life by parents, however much they loved her, be removed; that the privilege prized so highly by all women of choosing for themselves be permitted her. She felt that she had never relinquished the right.

A Christmas Day two years ago was in no small degree responsible for this decision. How many times since that eventful day had she questioned their happiness as husband and wife. Romance—romance is a part of every girl's life—had been destroyed, as she firmly believed. Alice was not visionary, but the thought of being engaged by others was not in entire agreement with her subsequently acquired notions of propriety. She was fully persuaded that had her parents been less officious in matrimonial affairs in which Edward and herself were principally concerned, it would have been better. Edward and she were the sufferers in that their losses included the attractions of courtship. Early betrothals may be convenient in Monarchial institutions, but in Republics, the

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opposite rule obtains. The reasons for preserving estates in the one are considered secondary to securing happiness in the other. Two years ago, she would have been distressed by the thought of giving up her "big boy" lover, but now, in the light of lately acquired wisdom, together with the fact that they had been so very little in each other's society, it would be accompanied with no sacrifice to either. Fate had been kind to them in opening their eyes to realities. Delusions of childhood and the reflections of years are experiences incidental to life, but always to be discriminated in favor of advanced enlightenment. Marriage is more than a civil contract, it is a sacrament. Marriage without love is sacrilege. Sentiment is one thing; love quite another. They had dabbled in the former. They were—well—they were—yes, she was sure, as positive as one may well be of anything in this mundane sphere, within the saving grace of sentiment.

Edward had disappointed her. He was vastly different. The bonds were alike burdensome to him. His evident embarrassment at their meetings; his coldness because she waltzed with Frank Crawford, only the night before, whose dancing was perfection, convinced her of his changed feelings toward herself. Besides, he paid Florence Herbert such marked attention the same evening that others commented upon it, to say nothing about rumors

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she had heard of them while Florence was living with her uncle at New Haven.

Well, if he preferred Florence, the matter was simple enough; he could have her and welcome. She emphatically objected to any plan of division whereby she received the thunder of his countenance and Florence the sunshine. These reflections were interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps, and glancing from the window, she discovered Edward and her adopted brother, as she had come to call the little boy, whom she had rescued from the officer of the law, two years ago, walking familiarly side by side toward the house.

"Dress and circumstance are potent factors in his estimation," she admitted, *sotto voce*, by no means arguing well for the stylishly dressed gentleman. She even felt resentment against her adopted brother for encouraging the intimacy.

Well, for old times' sake she would be civil.

"Good evening, Edward," advancing to meet him.

"Good evening, Miss Richards."

Miss Richards!

"Will you come in and be seated?" with borrowed sweetness.

"Thank you."

"How did you enjoy the party?" she inquired.

"It was a hideous nightmare."

"Your appearances were anything but sleepy whenever I saw you," she remarked, innocently.

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"Rare occasions. I wish I were more fortunate."

"Quite the contrary. Perhaps I saw too much. Miss Herbert is charming. I heard several making complimentary speeches about yourself and Miss Herbert."

"I was not aware of the kindness. Pray, was Mr. Crawford among the number of those sounding our praises?"

"Oh, indeed! He is very clever."

"He dances well."

"Superbly!"

"Say, Alice, let's banish these two years from our lives."

"Years, like words spoken, never can be recalled," oracularly.

"Well, forget them, then."

"Really, do you think it possible?—Come, you hesitate."

"I was thinking of a suitable reply."

"Then I regret the interruption."

"I can never go back—fully—we have both changed——?"

"Yes, apparently."

"In the last four days, I have lived four hundred years."

"What a pity! How much peace of mind depends upon a poor memory."

"May I refresh yours?"

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"With the burden of four hundred years? Mercy, no."

"With the hopes of time and eternity."

"Contradictions! First it is burdens, then, hopes. Still we are asked to put faith in man," resignedly.

"I am come to keep faith."

"And find it the burden of four hundred years. It must be the pricks of heavy conscience. What a pity the sale of indulgences has gone out of use."

"My conscience is the least of my troubles."

"A man's conscience is his privilege."

"Yes! In what respect?"

"Rather ask me to generalize. Let me see—but, first, will you confess——"

"I come to confess——"

"To the point, will you admit, if I give the right analysis?"

"You are so much in the wrong, a promise is safe. Proceed."

"Do you promise?"

"Of course."

"A man's conscience," she proceeded, with great deliberation, "is a license—a law unto itself, that authorizes any and every means to the gratification of his pleasure and amusement."

"Women give us our code of morals."

"From Adam's time to the present, woman is

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the fall of man," she laughed. "According to tradition you must acknowledge, she is greatly traduced."

"And greatly loved," he said, resolutely.

"There! You deserve an apple," passing one to him. "See, I will eat of the fruit first."

"I trust we shall never be driven from the Garden for the transgression."

"I warrant, tho', as the avenging angel approached, you would exclaim, after the manner of the illustrious Adam, 'She tempted me to eat!' "

"No, I would shield her! She should remain, even though the judgment pronounced were banishment in solitary exile."

SOLITARY EXILE. Alice glanced at the speaker swiftly.

"Man must be getting better and woman worse," there was the least trace of irony in the voice. "There! I shall talk no more."

"Then I may urge you to sing, perhaps, the old song—our song—it will carry us back to the past."

Without replying, she rose and walked to the piano. For a moment her white, slender fingers wandered over the keys, then her rich contralto voice filled the room. Songs of the great masters followed one upon another, Edward silently turning the leaves as she sang. Alice was a surprise to him. She was a Jennie Lind. The power

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her voice thrilled him, while the splendor of her face fascinated him. In the midst of a popular song, the hands rested and the voice ceased. Some sudden impulse, fancy, caprice took possession of the singer. Once more the hands glided over the keys. It was Felix Mendelssohn's air to those words of Burns that immortalized Jessie Lewars. Once more the lips parted, and Alice as well as Edward was carried into those realms of self-forgetting song. It was the "old song" the "our song" sung from memory.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy shield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise
If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

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Edward leaned against the piano, breathing with difficulty, his white face getting still whiter as she sang, while his eyes burned with suppressed emotion—eyes out of which flashed the new light of an impassioned soul. He was cold, yet his blood was on fire. The cruel lasting rapture of a deathless passion had seized and possessed him.

With the last word of the song, Alice glanced upward and met the gaze unsteadily. She always felt as she sang; she could not sing without inspiration, but the awakenings had been different. There was a light in his face that burned her. For a brief moment she gazed, with the rapture of the song lingering upon her senses, mingling with some unknown sensation. She started to her feet with a shudder, while the hand dallying softly with the keys fell upon her bosom and rested there.

"I thank you for the music," Edward said, recovering his composure. "Your voice was always sweet, but I did not imagine it held such marvelous power and volume."

"Flattery is not good form."

"I was speaking of one of the changes that have taken place in you."

"Only one! Is it safe to inquire of the others?" coquettishly.

"You have grown prodigiously beautiful."

"I see what you have been doing at college," she replied, serenely.

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"Horace and Homer," he declared.

"Indeed, no! Paraphrasing soft speeches. I have heard that Yale and ale both go to the tongue and head."

"It is a monstrous slander; each warms the affections. College life expands the heart, and the beverage is famed for its amiability."

"Say, Edward," dexterously toying with the tips of her handkerchief.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"Did you flirt and make love to the girls while at college?"

"Did I flirt and make love to the girls at college!" he repeated, deliberately, "Why, Alice, what a question! Could I have in honor done *that*——"

"Miss Herbert is lovely," she laughed.

"Alice, my engagement——rather our engagement——was always sacred."

"But you must no longer be bound by it. Our parents had no right to encumber our lives with obligations distasteful, perhaps repulsive."

Edward had come and stood so near her that she heard his heavy breathing.

"Surely," she continued, without looking up, "neither you nor I can consider their arrangement binding upon ourselves. I give you back your freedom. Our happiness——"

"*Our* happiness," he interrupted, huskily.

"*Mine*, then, requires it."

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At last the words were spoken. Alice had dreaded their utterance; she was surprised at her own calmness.

“Your—happiness—requires—the end—of our—engagement?” he asked, slowly, in such a changed voice that she hardly recognized it. “Are you sure, Alice, quite—quite sure—that what you say is true? Alice,” he repeated again, “you are sure your heart and happiness ask this sacrifice of me?”

“Yes.”

“*You are free!*”

She should never forget the words, nor the voice, nor the look. Her hands shook when she passed the ring back to its giver.

“Shall I tell them—our parents?” he asked steadily.

“Must they know?”

“Certainly,” he answered.

“And you will tell them—you?” She had expected reproaches.

“Yes, it is better; they would feel—they would know——” he paused, abruptly.

“Know what?” she inquired.

“The secret I must guard.”

“What secret to guard?”

“The secret of my love. *I love you.*”

The next moment she was alone. She went to the window and watched him walking down the

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marble steps. The boy darted up among the shrubbery and joined him, but there was no greeting. Abashed, the boy peered into his face, and glanced uneasily toward the house. For a moment he was irresolute, then stepping boldly forward, he took the cold hand in his little chubby ones, and walked on by the side of the wretched man.

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CHAPTER III.

“Good morning, Edward.” The salutation was spoken by Mr. Richards, who had stopped, at the entrance of the bank, upon noticing the approach of the young man.

“Good morning, Mr. Richards,” returned Edward, “I was on my way to the bank.”

“As you were passing by, you must have forgotten its location,” laughed the man of finance.

“I must plead guilty to absent-mindedness,” admitted the young man, retracing his steps. “In fact, I am greatly alarmed; both father and mother are ill.”

“What appears to be the trouble? Nothing serious, I trust.”

“I wish I might think so. The physician seems confident of breaking up the fever; but there are so many cases of typhoid in the city.”

“You do not mean to tell me,” exclaimed the banker, “that your parents are ill of fever?”

“I fear as much,” replied the son, in an unsteady voice.

“Let us hope,” replied the banker, “that your words are the result of present anxiety. By the way,” continued the speaker, “I will go home with

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you directly, if you can wait until I step inside a few seconds."

"I come to have a private interview with you," answered the young man. "Afterwards, if you are able to get away, we will return together. I do not wish to be absent from home long."

The banker invited Edward into the office, and they entered the building together, the door of the president's office opening and closing upon them.

"Now, what is it, my boy?" inquired the banker, kindly, facing about.

"Miss Richards wishes to be released from her engagement," said Edward, terribly calm.

"Come, my boy, this is neither the time nor the subject for jesting," remarked the banker severely.

"Mr. Richards," repeated Edward, "your daughter has asked me for her freedom and I have granted it."

The banker was dumbfounded.

"May I inquire, sir, if her action is due to conduct or behavior unbecoming a gentleman?" There was suppressed anger, verging near the danger line in the tone of the inquiry.

"Miss Richards," replied Edward, "assigns no other reason for the request than that of her happiness. No consideration of my own sentiments should be permitted to stand in the way of that attainment. I trust you will retract any refer-

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ence to conduct and behavior that has been made.”

“I beg your pardon—what sudden madness is this? My daughter shall be brought to her senses. Why, we have always, from the time you were little tots, treated the alliance as settled. This is a whim in which you ought not to have humored her—unless—perhaps—the desire to be free is mutual,” the speaker became cautious and guarded. “In such case, of course——”

“Please let us discuss the subject no further,” said Edward. “I know Miss Richards would wish me to inform you of the changed relationship. Still, in my judgment, it is best that my father and mother remain in ignorance of the broken engagement. They are wrapt up in Alice, and I dread the consequences of the discovery in their present condition.”

“My boy,” declared the banker, “if you want Alice you shall have her.”

“*Want her—want her!*” breathed Edward, drunk with temptation. He pressed his hand against his throbbing temples, the cool perspiration moistening his palm.

“Yes, she is yours! No child of mine shall——”

“Stop! We are meditating a crime against your daughter. Once for all I would counsel her against parental authority—yea, more, I would rescue her from herself sooner than see her going to the altar without the consent of her heart.

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Unless Alice Richards marries the man she loves," continued Edward solemnly, "her life is ruined—ruin that should drive me mad, if I were the unhappy man."

"Edward, my boy, I never half appreciated your character. Alice is a sensible girl, and, perhaps, it will come out all right yet."

The father and mother of Edward Reynolds died believing that the marriage was to be solemnized between their son and the daughter of the life-time friends. During the weeks of protracted illness either Mr. Richards or his wife was constantly at the home of the afflicted ones, rendering the last mortal moments of the sufferers as comfortable and peaceful as love and affection are ever able to do.

Mrs. Reynolds survived her husband but one week, the knowledge of his death being withheld from her until the day that the two souls were reunited in the great Unknown. For hours previous to her death she had been unconscious. The physician had told the watchers at the bedside that the dying woman would probably rally just before dissolution. Gathered about that death-bed were the son, Mrs. Richards, Alice and the housekeeper, waiting for the end.

At last the eyes opened, and upon recognizing those present a wan smile hovered about the bloodless lips.

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"How is your father, Edward?"

Edward knelt by the bed and taking the wasted hand lying upon the coverlet in his, kissed the thin lips before answering: "Father is at rest, Mother." Mrs. Reynolds closed her eyes wearily. After several moments she looked up again.

"I am dying, Edward, my darling boy."

"Yes, Mother, you are leaving me." The words choked him.

"You will be brave, and noble, and good, all your life, Edward?"

"Yes, Mother."

"And true?"

"And true."

"And a Christian?"

"Yes, with God's help, a Christian." She reached up and drew his head down upon her bosom, her hand moving caressingly over the heavy hair.

"Good-bye, Anna," sobbed Mrs. Richards, pressing a kiss upon the marble brow.

"Good-bye, Mary," responded the sick woman, feebly. And two women that had loved each other nearly a quarter of a century looked into each other's eyes for the last time.

"Where is Alice?" asked the dying mother.

"I am here," coming forward from a place near the window, where she had taken refuge, her eyes red with weeping.

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Mrs. Richards took the hand that Alice had placed gently upon her hair and held it.

“Children,” the lips fluttered, “you must be good to each other. ‘At rest,’” she repeated, her mind wandering. “How bright the room is getting! Where is my boy?—let me see your face, Edward—bend nearer—the light blinds me—You will always love and cherish Alice?”

“Mother! Mother!” moaned Edward in agony.

“Speak louder. I do not hear—always—love—her?”

Edward Reynolds pressed his lips to his mother’s ear and whispered: “I shall always love Alice.”

“And—you—A-l-i-c-e?——”

The lips ceased moving, the head sank deeper in the pillows; the spirit had fled.

Upon those cold lips was still lingering an unfinished question—unfinished and unanswered.

Silently they moved from the room, leaving the broken-hearted son alone with his dead.

An hour later Alice went to the door and, opening it slightly, glanced into the chamber of death. Edward was still kneeling by the bedside, his arms thrown across the body and his face resting upon the heart that should beat no more.

What should she do? What ought she to do? She recalled with a shudder the last words of the dead and silently closed the door, remaining in the

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hallway with a white hand lying upon the silver knob.

In there the friend, companion, playmate, lover of her childhood was bowed under the crushing bereavement of a mother's death. In all the wide world he was utterly alone. What had he whispered in his dying mother's ear? Something like a guilty fear was stealing into the girl's heart. An overmastering impulse was gaining upon her resolution. What if he were proud and cold to the world's unfortunates, he had loved and had worshipped his mother! He loved—the blood was tingling in her veins. There in the room beyond the playmate, companion and lover was stunned and bruised by the blow of a mother's loss, while she was standing with a hand trembling upon the knob of the door without—the door that would yield to her slightest motion. Suddenly she remembered. Memory! flashing through her mind like a bolt from heaven! Within the last six weeks she had renounced forever the privilege that was treasured now. Ay, more; she had promised to give her life into the keeping of another. She felt that safety lay in flight, when she became conscious of another's presence.

"We must bring him away," said the housekeeper. "He must not remain in the room longer." Then the servant turned and confronted the girl, inquiring:

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"You are Alice, are you not—Alice Richards?"

"Yes," responded Alice, "but I would be anybody—anybody else." Scarcely had Alice spoken, when the old woman caught the hands of the girl and covered them with caresses.

"Accept my love and blessing," she said brokenly. "I have never known a want since that Christmas night when *he* came and found me and my boy perishing, and through you——"

"Through me—me? I know not the meaning of your words."

"Did Edward never tell you?"

Alice tottered backward, as though 'defending herself against a threatened blow.

"It was my son and the boy at your home that took the chicken to give me life; and Edward, the noblest, truest, tenderest, came late that Christmas night and delivered us. O Miss Richards——" But Alice had pushed past the speaker and was fleeing down the hall—away—away from the memory and the horror of it all. At last, she understood the reason of the boy's affection for Edward. At last! at last—but, too late!

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CHAPTER IV.

Llewellyn Eldridge was forty-five years of age when he met Alice Richards and fell desperately in love with her; a thing which a much younger man, or, for that matter, a much older one might have done without exciting any great wonderment.

Banker Richards had known Eldridge during a period of ten years in a business way. It chanced, upon one of these visits of the latter at the bank, that the meeting took place between Alice and Llewellyn. Miss Richards had called, as was her wont, at the well-known banking establishment to see her indulgent parent a moment upon some charitable mission, interrupting a momentous business interview between her father and a fine-looking, well-dressed stranger. Mr. Richards found himself in that uncomfortable dilemma of either being rude to a valuable patron or, waiving conventionality, of presenting his daughter.

Alice Richards did not fail to notice the strong, resolute face and stalwart figure of her father's client; yet, she would have been the most astonished lady in the City of Brotherly Love had she been told, then and there, that within the next

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three months she was to be led to the altar by the gentleman bowing in acknowledgment of the introduction.

Llewellyn Eldridge had been left a couple of thousand dollars as his portion of his father's estate. This money came to him just as he was entering his twenty-second year. Young Llewellyn had never taken to agriculture in a way to rejoice his bucolic sire. In fact, the young man had shown so little promise of fulfilling his industrious parent's expectations on the farm that he had been sent to college, in order, as it was regarded, to do the next best thing for the lad.

However, arriving at majority, and finding himself counting his share of an estate which he had contributed so little to create, he had some idea of the world in general, and a valuable knowledge of many things in particular.

Before one month had elapsed after coming into possession of his \$2,000 legacy, he had purchased a small tract of timber land, some miles above Lock Haven, on the banks of Sinnemahoning River, and had a saw-mill in course of erection; within two years he was worth \$10,000; twenty years later he was a millionaire.

He was at Philadelphia to consummate a deal prodigious as compared with any previous project undertaken by this rising financier. He was compelled to admit someone into his confidence; it

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was Banker Richards. They looked the matter over together; consultations followed at the bank, and at the residence. He met Miss Alice frequently. Sometimes there were conferences which the banker did not attend. These latter became more frequent and of longer duration. In short, it is a debatable question whether or no that "deal" at the banker's office was not suffering somewhat in consequence.

Tho' Llewellyn Eldridge had been a successful business man, and had rubbed elbows with the shrewdest speculative talent of the lumbering centers, without getting the worst of the encounter, he had never had much experience with the fair sex; but, if one were to judge by appearances at the residence of Banker Richards, a most favorable opinion should have been passed upon his ability in the new field of adventure.

"A box of gloves, of Parisian make, just from France!" True enough, a woman of less indifference to such feminine, but useful, ornaments than Alice Richards would have exclaimed in more extravagant rhapsodies over the perfect and exquisite package of the very latest cuts, just arrived from that maternal source of fashionable novelties—Paris—and now placed in her hands by Llewellyn Eldridge, returning from a day's run to New York. Llewellyn had three sisters, and he blessed them a thousand times for each and every

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pair of gloves he had lavished upon them, severally and collectively, upon seeing the grateful look in Alice's deep and lustrous eyes.

"I wanted to bring you some memento of my visit to the city, Alice," a little dubious over the lack of formality in omitting the conventional "Miss Richards," at the same time forgetting to mention that he had worked a full half day with Una, his youngest and most frivolous sister, in a roundabout way, to find out what present a gentleman could make a lady, that would be, in all likelihood, the most acceptable.

"I fear you will think me vain," injecting the tips of her fingers into the left one. Did you ever notice that a woman invariably puts a glove on the left hand first, and a shoe on the left foot?

"And my size, too," coloring profusely at a not unwelcome familiarity, associated as the thought was with previous close observation, with which he must have scrutinized those same fragile digits that were to be protected by his thoughtfulness.

Bold resolves were executed with dispatch by this man. It was the habit of his life.

"What beautiful hands!" appropriating them in his, firmly, in a manner that would have done credit to an *habitué* of a fashionable summer resort.

"No, Alice, do not remove them." There was a

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strange quaver in his voice. "I love you, Alice; be my wife." The usually white face was even gray in its colorlessness.

"Darling, I shall make up for the discrepancy in our years with the deepest and truest love. Oh, how men stumble! To be reputed rich, to have the world acknowledge in me the genius of the financier has been the absorbing motive of my existence. A home and thy sweet companionship will go far towards compensating for years squandered in the pursuit of wealth."

The hands still remained in his, and a moment later he drew an unresisting head to his breast, while the face, peeping from masses of golden hair, was very suggestive of unalloyed happiness.

That afternoon two gentlemen were closeted in the most private of all private compartments of the great banking institution of Philadelphia. The elder gentleman had just shaken the younger one by the hand most cordially.

"A fine day, Mr. Richards."

"Indeed it is," assented the banker, affably.

"I have something very near my heart about which I wish to consult you."

"Yes, I understand; here are the reports of the surveyors and timber experts," indicating a stack of memorized sheets lying upon the table, which had but at that moment been receiving the earnest inspection of the speaker.

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"But, Mr. Richards, you do not quite comprehend me."

"No?"

"I am about to ask a great personal sacrifice——"

"I have every confidence in the gentlemen furnishing the reports, and shall be only too glad to accommodate——"

"But, Mr. Richards——"

"I never felt so satisfied with a project, and should like nothing better than sharing in the enterprise; you will clear a cool million; you'll——"

"Mr. Richards."

"Well?"

"If I should ask a great favor——"

"\$1,000, or a hundred of them——"

"It is not a matter of money," helplessly.

"NOT A MATTER OF MONEY?" The banker shifted in his chair, preparatory to sizing his visitor up in a new light.

"It is much nearer than dollars and cents," continued the younger man in a conciliatory, yet nervous, tone, noticing the look of alarm, or rather suspicion, in the other's eyes.

"I shall respect your confidence," commenced the banker, clearing his throat, feeling that he was being surprised out of his domain of finance, "and trust you will do me the honor of making your wishes known with perfect frankness, assur-

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ing you by our many years of BUSINESS association, that, if it lies within my power to aid or advise, you may rely upon my assistance and counsel." The banker was not a man of sentiment at the bank, and it was next to impossible to disassociate "business" from any transaction.

"Thank you. In fact, you are the only person in position to help me in this affair; that is——"

"Not dollars and cents," ruminated the banker, respectfully waiting for the other to proceed.

"I want a wife."

The banker felt relieved.

"A wife! Why, bless your soul, a man of your age and in your position," deliberately pursued the noted financier, "can marry easily enough. There is not a lady in the city, of any sense, who would reject such a proposal." He felt well upon delivering the compliment.

"I love your daughter."

"The devil!"

"I trust his majesty has not been consulted in the matter," thought Eldridge, nettled at the vehemence of the banker.

"And she—Alice——"

"Loves me."

"THE DEVIL!"

The man of finance collapsed, colored apoplectically, rose from his chair, walked to the side of the table, where the younger man was standing,

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and, laying his hand on his arm, led him to the door. "Go tell Alice she has pleased her father."

Eldridge's heart was too full for utterance, but, in parting, he wrenched the banker's hand in a way that threatened the safety of that member.

The door was scarcely closed before the clerk projected his head in the room.

"Sam Jones wants \$1,000 for thirty days."

"Let him have it."

"What?" said the messenger, personally knowing the insolvency of Jones.

"Let him have it." The boy disappeared, but was back in a moment.

"Jasper Clark's note of \$3,000 is offered for discount."

"Discount it." The boy departed.

"That man Eldridge is a man of proper and superior judgment."

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CHAPTER V.

"Mother," quizzed Banker Richards, the morning paper lying unnoticed on the table at his finger-tips, "what is the matter with Alice?"

"Really, I do not know. I am troubled about the child," she admitted after a brief pause.

"The world is coming to a pretty pass," declared Mr. Richards, "if we send our daughters away to female seminaries that they may be instructed in the arts and accomplishments of shamming."

"Alice is not deceitful," the motherly instinct aroused in defense of her child.

"The proper name is shamming, that's what it is. If she thinks she can pull the wool over my eyes, she's mistaken most mightily. This bubbling over with joy before our faces and white and scared when our backs are turned is concealment—shamming. I don't see any sense in being happy and laughing unless one feels happy and like laughing," he concluded, sententiously.

"Are you sure it is not our imagination?" inquired his wife, giving the culprit the benefit of the doubt.

"Well, I tell you imagination is one thing, see-

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ing a thing, another. Last evening, for instance, Alice and I were sitting on the veranda, when our youngster and that boy over at Reynolds' bobbed up mysteriously from somewhere and flung themselves upon the grass under the edge of the porch.

" 'Yep, he is going, for a sure thing,' said the boy belonging over yonder, unaware of our presence, 'and he is taking a sight of stuff with him, trunk after trunk; just as if he was going to stay the balance of his natural life.'

" 'Where is he migrating to?' put in our youngster.

" 'Ingea.'

" 'What makes him go?'

" 'Because, probable, it's lonesome since his father and mother died.'

" 'I bet it hain't that,' hazarded our young imp, with the gusto of a born skeptic.

" 'I guess I know,' replied the visiting boy, bristling up.

" 'Didn't you never hear anything?' says our hopeful, confidentially.

" 'Well, I guess! Mother is always telling me, "little pitchers has big ears." Why, they say, he is rich as Crokus, or Crowecus, or something like that. The estate is all settled, and he has worked day and night, and we are going to stay there right along just the same.'

" 'Is that all?' asked our lad, with a post-grad-

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uate air of disdain for the A B C knowledge of his companion. Then, quick as flash, he continued: 'I don't suppose you ever heard that Edward and Alice used to be sweethearts—and downright spoony, too?'

"'Watch them scatter,' whispered Alice to me, and, tiptoeing to the railing, she doused the water of a half-filled vase upon their gossiping heads. As by magic they disappeared around the corner of the house. Then Alice came back to my side, her eyes shining like two stars, and pressing her cold, laughing lips to my cheek, said: 'I never was spoony, was I, papa, dear?'

"'Spoony is capital,' I agreed. 'Spooniest of the spoony.'

"'Do good for evil,' she smiled. 'I shall bring you a bouquet,' and she tripped away, humming some love-tune."

"Surely," remarked Mrs. Richards, who had paid the closest attention to her husband's recital, "our fears are without foundation."

"I thought so, too," added the banker. "But, as Alice did not return, I went to the conservatory to see what had become of her. I found her crouched upon the ground in a corner, half-buried beneath palm leaves, her arms thrown over a bench and her white face resting upon those bare arms. I watched her as long as I could bear before speaking. At the sound of my voice she

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sprang to her feet, and in an instant was at my side trembling and laughing."

"What did she say," interrupted Mrs. Richards. "Did she offer no explanation?"

"Explain nothing!" declared the banker. "'Did you find me snoozing?' she asked, pulling me away to a rose bush flush with bloom. 'Are they not lovely? See, this one I shall give you,' breaking off the rose and securing it to the lapel of my coat."

"Does Alice feel that she is making a mistake, do you think?" inquired Mrs. Richards, anxiously.

"She *is* making a mistake," declared the banker. "I do not approve the way she has broken off her engagement with Edward. Why, I never broke a promise in my entire life."

"Like father, like daughter," sighed Mrs. Richards.

"Not in the way of fulfilling engagements," declared the banker.

"Yes, even so," asserted Mrs. Richards. "The engagement between Alice and Edward, was a bargain made by the parents of the children; the one made between Alice and Mr. Eldridge is made by them, and the father of our darling child never, in all his life, kept a promise more sacredly, more religiously, than that child will keep hers."

"If she does not love Eldridge," said the banker resolutely, "much as I like the fellow, I would send him back to the pine woods."

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"Hush! I hear Alice coming," and the next moment the subject of the parents' uneasiness danced into the room, the very embodiment of youth, contentment, happiness.

"I have a surprise, papa."

"A discovery of a new beggar, I will wager."

"Guess again."

"Well, Llewellyn has been writing silly letters."

"Oh, papa, you say that because you want me to run away."

"I shall win medals sometime for cleverness in guessing answers to conundrums."

"Not unless you improve prodigiously. Come, sir, you have another chance."

"Hasn't Eldridge been writing nonsense?" watching her closely.

"Please, papa, don't be horrid. What do you think I am going to show you? Something glorious! I have it here," revealing a hand holding a letter, which was passed rapidly before her father's eyes and returning in temporary hiding behind her.

"Give me time."

"How long? One, two, three, four, five, six," and she went on counting up to twenty.

"Will it keep?"

"What keep?"

"The surprise."

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"I know what I shall do, and there is a dear old papa that won't be the wiser."

"Will you tell Eldr——" Here the hand at liberty was placed over the offending lips, only to be released upon the head of the gentleman nodding assent to the interrogation, "Will you be good?"

"There, I have mussed your hair to pay for your impertinence. Besides," she added, "I am going to make you sorry because of your bad behavior," whereupon the dainty and perfumed pages of a letter were spread before her father's eyes, which he read eagerly, Alice watching his face closely as he proceeded:

"PARIS, FRANCE.

"May 19, 1850.

"Dearest Alice:—Your ever welcome letter received, and contents—well, for want of a better word—devoured. Your engagement takes my breath away. Just as I had abandoned hope of such a happy contingency, that is, putting on 'The chains that bind,' I receive the glad tidings I had given up anticipating. I know he must be nice, or you would never love and marry him.

"You know that I shall come. It is three long years since I have seen you. Alice, wilful but steadfast, did two girls ever love each other more? The Count, bless his heart, says you are the only

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one of whom he is really ever jealous. The Count is coming, too, and Leonard. Leo, that is Leonard, is two in August. Oh, what a boy he is! Robust and mischievous! Both nurse and myself are tired out when night comes, he is such a happy care. How we love our children! But dear me, I am writing of my affairs, when I am thinking of yours. I know I shall like your affianced husband, from your description, however modest. When a man of his years—no offense—falls in love, it is ‘for keeps,’ as my brothers used to say when playing marbles. You must visit France on your honeymoon. There is no lovelier spot under the sun. Dear old France, with her romance and her history. There is a warm place in my heart for my native America, but I am so happy, darling, here with my husband and Leo, I could never think of going back to stay. Sometimes I get the least tiny bit lonesome, and then I think, if you could come and live here, too, how nice it would be. You always said I was selfish; but, I suppose, it is out of the question—that is, your living here. Anyway, the Count says he is going to hold a certain husband and wife prisoners when they visit France until two beautiful women quarrel, and then he can have me all to himself.

“Your marriage is so near we are making preparations to start at once. I cannot tell you, dearest friend, of the joy with which I am looking for-

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ward, after so many years of separation, to our reunion. We were all in all to each other during those years of intimacy. Dear me! Do you remember what silly and sensible girls we were, too? But we will go over those reminiscences together.

"Give my love to your father and mother. The Count sends regards to all. Oh, I hope you will be so happy, happy, dear Alice, in the life before you.

"Your loving Eleanore,
"Countess Ratcliff."

"Isn't it splendid of them to come?" queried Alice.

"I am glad for my little girl's sake. Just think, Nobility at my daughter's wedding!"

"Papa, you know I don't care for titles any more than you do."

"Kiss me and we'll make up. There, Eleanore is a sweet, brimming-full-of-sense little woman, and her presence at my Alice's wedding is a source of gratification, inasmuch, alone, as she is my daughter's intimate friend, and for many years her companion. I will go even farther, I shall bury all resentment for those many sleepless nights, of which I still cherish painful recollections, because of two tittering girls in a distant section of the house, talking confidences loud enough to be heard four blocks away, when they should have been hours asleep."

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“Mercy, papa, you are most ungracious.”

“So you are glad to leave me, eh?”

“No, no, not that; but——”

“Yes, I know those ‘buts.’ This is what a man gets for walking the floor of nights, of rousing up at two in the morning with the mercury twenty below zero and going a mile for a doctor, because ‘baby’ has the colic. This is our reward!” concluding in mock resignation.

“We are going to live here except summers, when you and mamma are to stay with us, and Llewellyn says it is the delight of sportsmen to fish in those streams; besides, you have worked enough, and Llewellyn says we shall all pull stakes and travel.”

“‘And Llewellyn says,’” groaned the father, while any further remark was interrupted by the entrance of a middle-aged lady. Mrs. Richards was essentially a home body, still retaining her youthful buoyancy of spirits and comeliness. Years ago she had brought her young husband the nucleus of his present fortune. She had watched his success with all the pride of an affectionate, if not ambitious, woman. Once she had checked the impulse to gratify the passion for beautiful and costly things. They could not afford them. The time came, however, when she could and did indulge inclinations to the utmost. It was for Alice’s sake. God had given them but

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one child, and she had had a home surrounded with every refinement that lies at the command of wealth.

"What do you think, mother, Alice is bound we shall pull stakes and vamoose."

"That is, travel, mamma," interrupted the daughter.

"It would be pleasant to go abroad for a year or two," assented the elder lady in a calm, matter-of-fact way.

"Get my hat and coat, you young siren, while I beat a retreat from these arch conspirators. Mind, another word about this proposed hegira and I'll tell Eldridge all about Reynolds," he admonished, fixing his eyes once more searchingly upon her face.

"Ha, ha! forestalled again!" cried Alice at the disappearing husband and father.

This man had a dual life: one—clear, incisive, frigid, at the bank; the other—lovable, paternal, domestic, at home. Both institutions were sacred; hence, perhaps, the double existence.

"How jolly papa is!" exclaimed Alice.

"He is very fond of Mr. Eldridge. He believes in his business ability. Mr. Eldridge is a person of excellent character and business integrity, besides possessing great personal attraction. Your father does not doubt his daughter's future happiness. Among the men of the world, my child,"

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continued the mother, "your parents could not have found a son-in-law in whom they will take greater pleasure." As the woman spoke, the arm of the girl stole around the speaker's waist, while with the disengaged hand, she pushed the heavy tresses of hair back from the mother's forehead, affectionately. How perfectly they understood each other.

"Mamma, I am—happy; sometimes when I lie awake in bed, it seems almost wicked that God should be so good to me, when so many others——"

"Hush, child! In the abstract of happiness, we attach too much importance to conditions of wealth and position. A woman's kingdom is the kingdom of love. Sometimes I have thought I would have been happier if we had been less favored with this world's goods; a man is more dependent upon his wife's love in humble circumstances. There are so many ways she can lift him from despondency that he learns to rest upon her love for confidence and strength. She misses the sweet privilege as one of the penalties of great prosperity. A woman's heart is a strange anomaly; it must be tasked in order to expand. Woman is the smaller vessel but the stronger. She survives when man perishes; she will build a temple of sunshine of the broken fragments of man's crushed hopes—tut, tut, what am I talking?

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Run away to the piano, while I read Eleanore's letter."

The girl moved towards a rosewood piano. In passing she paused a moment at the window, which looked out upon the wealthy section of the city, and drew back the heavy lace curtains to admit more light. As she did so she noticed an open carriage passing the house. The sole occupant glanced up in the direction of the window; their eyes met. The man lowered his head and urged the horse to greater speed.

"Mamma, come here, quick!"

"What is it, Alice?"

"That is Edward—Mr. Reynolds," pointing at the disappearing carriage.

"Yes," said Mrs. Richards.

"He looked this way, and I thought——" she paused.

"You thought," repeated Mrs. Reynolds.

"Oh, I thought his face was white and—and full of pain."

The face haunted her. That time had come in her life when she fully realized that an impassable gulf had been dug by the silent workmen that shape the destinies of human lives; and on the farther shore she saw the man, whom she had regarded many years as her future husband, whom she had liked if not loved in those olden days, vivid and real, reaching his strong arms toward

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• her. And then a fog, so dense and thick no eye could penetrate, arose in smothering vapors from the unseen depths of that gulf, enveloping the entreating form in mist.

The pain in the face troubled her, and a fear, chilling her, numbing her, crept stealthily over her heart, like unto the sound of cold clods dropping upon the lid in a new-made grave, where some loved one has been given back to Earth.

Alice Richards, thou art renouncing, unawares, those priceless treasures, whose value in after years shall seem unto thee greater than the gems of the Orient.

One false step has placed thy tender feet upon the edge of a mighty precipice. Thou knowest not thine own heart.

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CHAPTER VI.

The reader will follow the sole occupant of the carriage that was seen passing the residence of Banker Richards. We shall go with him to the house occupied by a Presbyterian minister, who had some two years before cast his fortune in the City of Brotherly Love. This young divine had risen rapidly into popularity and in the affection of his flock. In his ministerial capacity it had been his duty to officiate at the funerals of both parents of Edward Reynolds. Throwing the reins over the post, the young man sprang to the walk and ascended the steps in a way disclosing superfluity of strength and vitality. Though, perhaps, hurt as deeply as it is the lot of man to be in being denied what the heart covets most, his face reveals none of the anguish to the clerical gentleman answering the ring of the door-bell in person. As yet, this young co-worker in the vineyard of his Master keeps no servants.

“Come right in, Mr. Reynolds.” The minister was affability itself. “Let me take your hat,” securing the article mentioned in a way that implied with or without the consent of the owner. “Oh!

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the horse is all right; still, maybe I had better throw a blanket over him—back in a moment.”

Out in the street went the clerical gentleman, bare-headed, looking after the comfort of the animal, his ministerial robes by no means soiled by this action. Young Reynolds had protested at the proceedings, which had all been done so suddenly and unexpectedly that the reverend gentleman was running up the steps before his purpose had been fully comprehended by the visitor.

“Always have to take care of my guests, don’t you know? You came around the corner under considerable speed—horse sweating—take cold—spoiled.”

“Mr. St. Clair, I regret to have caused you this inconvenience. To tell the truth, I feel reprimanded. I am not usually so thoughtless.”

“No occasion for self-recrimination. I love the horse. Next to man, the horse enjoys intelligence, but horridly misunderstood. Yes, sir, the horse is gifted, and cultivating his acquaintance is a hobby I mean to indulge.”

The by no means lucrative income of the clergyman had barely sufficed for the more pressing needs of the household. Still, the cheerful disposition of the minister was able to see in the future a generous supply of such powerful auxiliaries to our happiness, and, upon the theory that there is more pleasure in anticipation than participation,

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the man of gospel was receiving his full share of enjoyment.

"You keep no horse, I believe?" inquired the visitor.

"No, sir, not just at present. Fact is, my accommodations are so cramped I have to forego the pleasure." No one would have suspected that the minister deprived himself of equine enjoyment for other reason than the one indicated.

"Will you allow me to present to you the horse which you tethered to the horse-block?"

"Will I allow you? What a question!" The minister was nervous. Already he saw the few elusive dimes he possessed scampering away on errands of purchasing oats, whereas it was only by practising the utmost frugality that the wants of the material man were supplied. He began to feel uncomfortable in that his zeal had betrayed him into a pit, from which he must extricate himself at whatever jeopardy to pride.

"You jest—you could not think seriously of parting with such a superb creature."

"I assure you, my kind friend, I was never more in earnest. Not only do I desire you to accept the horse, but I am about to urge you to occupy my home." The gentleman in cloth collapsed. "I am going away," taking advantage of the helplessness of his auditor, "to be gone several years. You already are aware that I have no kindred, ex-

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cept from the common parentage of the 'Garden.' "

Rev. St. Clair was a poor man; more, he had always been poor. He had worked his way through college, and was a capital manager. The remains of a dollar would linger longer in his pockets than in those of any other person the writer has ever known. This was not so much a matter of choice as of necessity. Still he never, in later years, made his previous privations and self-denial points of virtuous excellence. While he had never been at home on "Easy Street," as the saying goes, he preferred his acquaintances to reckon him an inhabitant of that favored locality, providing they would be gracious enough to consider him thus fortunate without the practice of duplicity on his part. Here was an instance in which the very agreeable delusion had to be shattered. He was too much of a worldly student to be ignorant of the fact that being "broke" is seldom troublesome, unless the secret is exposed to public inspection. He was in a dilemma, and, anxious to extricate himself as creditably as possible, without extra violence to his notions of the worldly fitness of things.

"Mrs. St. Clair and myself have become deeply attached to our modest home," commenced the dominie, to be stopped by the interruption——

"Now, Mr. St. Clair, I am not going to accept

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‘no’ for an answer. I have driven over to take yourself and worthy lady to examine the establishment, and, if you will acquaint Mrs. St. Clair with the object of my visit, in order that she may get ready to accompany us at the earliest possible moment, you will greatly oblige me.”

“Thinks I am a millionaire, with a couple of thousand rent—a bagatelle, five hundred, in keeping up the premises—a song!” ruminated the minister to himself. There is a sort of perversity in man’s make-up that is very indulgent to being considered well-to-do by associates. Upon sitting down, nine times out of ten, a man’s hand will instinctively cover, with unerring precision, the patch on the knee of his trousers, and holy orders, appearances to the contrary, are no exception to the rule. Rev. St. Clair cherished a genuine regard for his visitor. He evinced deep pleasure in the young man’s preference for his society. To be sure, the minister had known the parents of Edward Reynolds. He had feelingly preached the funeral sermons of father and mother, members of his church, following each other to the grave one week apart, and had offered such consolation to the sorrowing son as his professional privileges permitted. He had heard of the boy and girl attachment, of the broken engagement, and readily divined the cause of the resolve to go away. But his part in the present business transaction should

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be free from mercenary motives. So far as he was concerned, he would break the bubble.

"Mr. Reynolds, do you know I am a poor man?" It was said without reservation.

"Why, of course I do."

"Oh, you do! How refreshingly ingenuous," commented the clergyman to himself.

"I should not otherwise make the request," continued the young man.

"No?" arching the eyebrows a notch higher.

"You see, I am contemplating an absence of many years. I shall never dispose of the home of my parents. I want tenants to my taste, and the knowledge that the friends who have shown me so much kindness are living in my home, and that the old lady domestic and her son will be treated affectionately, that, perhaps, one room will be kept apart for my distant return, that the premises will be kept in repair and the grounds tended, as my parents delighted in them, will be to me, wherever I chance to go, a sweet reflection."

"I beg your pardon, but I repeat, I am a poor man."

"Yes, I know."

"I cannot pay rent."

"Rent! I have demanded no rent."

Rev. St. Clair began to wriggle uneasily in his chair. He seemed oppressed with a sense of the other's unfairness. The younger man, who was

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watching him intently, did not fail to observe the thoughts running in the clergyman's mind, and going to his side, took his hand kindly.

"You are my friend, you were my father's, my mother's friend; I am vacating my home, and must leave it in somebody's possession; whom so naturally to be chosen? You shall keep the old gardener, if you like, who knows every nook and crook of the grounds."

Mr. Reynolds could be very irresistible when he preferred, but a poor man's pride is no small obstacle to be removed. Mrs. St. Clair appeared in the room.

"I thought I recognized your voice," she said, extending her hand in welcome to the visitor. "By the way," she continued, "you must stay and dine with us."

Edward Reynolds was no stranger at the table of Rev. St. Clair. For some months a friendship had existed between these two men, who were in many respects of habit and disposition similar. Had Edward Reynolds been poor, he would have been a St. Clair; had St. Clair been born rich, he would have been an Edward Reynolds. The intimacy was profitable to both.

"On one condition," replied Reynolds, glancing from Mrs. St. Clair to her husband.

"Granted, if I may decide. Impose the terms."

"I have found an ally. Together, sir," ad-

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dressing the intrepid spiritual advisor, "we shall overcome your scruples."

Here Mrs. St. Clair was made acquainted with the nature of the visit, and joined so heartily in the plan that her devoted better-half capitulated at discretion. Possession was to be taken at once. Everything was to remain in the great house to be enjoyed by the new occupants until the owner's return. Mrs. St. Clair fluttered about, bubbling over with happiness at the prospects of the temporal advantages so unexpectedly fallen to their lot. She was an ambitious woman, proud of her husband, earnest in his work, anxious for his advancement. Her woman's intuition told her that a residence in the palatial home of the Reynolds would be attended with benefits of no mean order. Society imposes terms which may be artificial and unreasonable, but for all that, not to be despised; and this sensible little woman saw as through a horoscope the improvement of her husband's circumstances. The following years showed her a true prophetess.

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CHAPTER VII.

A small boy, perhaps fourteen years of age, had turned from the beaten highway and penetrated the dense wood growing upon either side of the road at this point.

About ten or fifteen rods farther, had he gone that distance, he would have come to a wooden bridge, which spanned the Sinnemahoning River, now turbulent with recent storms; and he might have seen, situated on the opposite shore, some eight or ten rods distant from the bank, a large, imposing house, surrounded by stately trees; and he could have heard the merry laughter of many children, for the daughter, who queened it in this magnificent residence, was celebrating, with appropriate festivities, her fifth birthday.

It was as well he turned into the forest where he did, else the sound of the glad voices, and the sight of the gay apparel, might have added more bitterness to the cup already overflowing.

Notwithstanding the early November day was severe, there was scarcely sufficient clothing worn by this youth to cover his nakedness. His little brown legs and arms were exposed below the knees and elbows; yet, he did not seem to mind his condi-

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tion, having been inured to all kinds of weather and privation. Such instances of endurance suggest to the mind an epiphytic being—able to exist in not withdrawing from the substance of others.

As the boy advanced into the wood, he surveyed the ground carefully, now and then his vigilance being rewarded in the discovery of a nut, which was immediately transferred to a basket suspended by a stout cord from his shoulders. The boy, during these operations among the leaves, kept up a nondescript whistling tune, being a sort of combination between content and resignation.

It was evident the squirrels, which watched the encroachment of the stranger with manifest suspicion, had preceded him and garnered the larger part of these kernels for their winter supply.

Having the advantage of experience, the lad searched the tops of the tall hickories and, locating such trees as had many burrs, would examine the ground beneath them with varying success.

Standing among the trees with his head thrown well back, gazing upwards, he presented a strange picture. His was a face singularly handsome, though emaciated and browned by exposure; every feature was strong and reliant. One seeing him thus might not well have avoided wondering by what combination of circumstances the lad was reduced to his present extremity; surely that boy's lineage was good. The quick intelligence of that

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face, and that massive head, about which clustered thick curls of hair, dark as a raven's wing, indicated a misunderstanding somewhere.

While in this attitude, his attention was attracted by the sound of children's voices, and, peering among the trees, he saw a number of boys and girls collecting their arms full of pieces of bark and driftwood, and approaching perilously near the angry river, they would throw this miscellaneous *débris* into the water, making the woods echo with the Babel of merriment.

"It is queer," he commented to himself, half aloud, "they are permitted to play in that manner; someone should warn them of their danger." But as he looked at their fine clothes and then at his own half-clad figure, he acknowledged to himself that, should he perform his office, it would only have the opposite effect, if for no other object than giving him to understand that advice was disdained coming from such a source.

Somehow the reflection afforded him anything but pleasure, and it is no wonder, there stole into his heart bitterness and rebellion against a fate, which held him, as in a vice, within these confines of social ostracism. It is a cruel lesson, this—and he was young to have learned it—that a service, however meritorious and opportune, is nearly always regarded as effrontery when volunteered by a social inferior; and it is just possible he was

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watching their diversion with less concern, when there rang out, shrill and distinct, from a frantic mother's lips, "My child, my child!"

All thoughts of indifference vanished, and with the fleetness of a deer he bounded forward to the group of silent, awe-stricken children. He seized the woman, who had arrived before him at the bank, and who was in the act of throwing herself into the swiftly gliding water, and forced her backward.

"Hold her," he said, and the next moment he had leaped far out into the torrent that lashed itself in its fury into foam. After a few regular strokes, he reached the yet conscious child, whose light woolen garments had buoyed her up.

"Do not clutch hold of me," he commanded, "and I will save you."

The mother and children followed along the shore, watching the struggles of the boy with intense anxiety. The peril of one of their favorites had broken down all barriers of social caste; and, yet, did they think of him save as an instrument by which one of their number was to be restored?

Wave after wave would beat them back from any temporary advantage; still, undaunted, the little fellow would renew his efforts with additional vigor. Slowly but surely he was nearing the bank with his helpless burden. Suddenly the watchers saw him bending to his task with every

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energy strained to its utmost, but the murmur of praise died upon their lips, and there issued from twenty small throats in chorus, "A rock! A rock! Look out for the rock!" They saw the boy clutch the girl close in his arms, then she shot out of those arms, past the ragged edges of the rock, into the stiller waters beyond. The boy recoiled, was swept onward like a plaything against the obstruction, was caught in the swirl, lifted nearly from the water, whirled around like a top, and disappeared beneath the waves.

Oh! would he never rise to the surface? Moments seemed ages to those anxious watchers. The grief-stricken mother, faint and despairing, fell upon her knees and implored heaven's aid in behalf of those perishing ones. And, as though in answer to her prayer, the boy arose to the surface and made his way with difficulty to the unconscious girl. Placing the collar of her dress between his teeth, supporting her head above the water, he swam slowly towards the shore. One arm was bruised and numbed by the collision. He caught and clung to the bough of a tree, which overhung the river, until a couple of men arrived, one of whom, taking in the situation at a glance, plunged into the river and brought the girl ashore. As might have been expected, all attention, quite naturally, centered upon her.

"There is life," said the man, undertaking with-

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out delay the work of resuscitation. As the girl gave signs of returning animation, he heard someone ask, "Where is the boy? He was clinging there a moment ago." The man bounded to his feet, muttering something like an oath between his clenched teeth. He ran along the bank of the river, peering into its depths, stopped, dived into the water, and, when he reappeared, held within his arms the still and passive form of the waif. In a moment he had regained the shore, and, laying his charge face downward, placed his hands immediately back and under the boy's chest, and lifted gently upwards, a stream of water gurgled from the lad's mouth. Then, fixing his hands on either side of the small chest, he produced artificial respiration, and continued so to do until a low moan issued from the thin lips. During the entire time occupied in these ministrations to the boy not so much as a sound escaped the man's lips, but at the first moan the child made he turned upon the man reaching the shore with him.

"You cur, I swear I would have murdered you if this young hero had drowned!"

The individual thus addressed, being of the opinion that he deserved rebuke, but not in the summary manner indicated, remained perfectly silent for fear the rude, blunt fellow might proceed, under any circumstances, to place his implied threat into execution.

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Mrs. Eldridge no sooner assured herself that her daughter was out of immediate danger than she hurried to the assistance of the brave boy and shrank not from chafing his hands and feet, until informed that it was no longer necessary, although her own soft hands were blistered by the friction; and, if ever a fervent and heartfelt "Thank God" was breathed from human lips, hers gave it utterance upon the little rescuer showing signs of life.

A messenger was despatched to summon a physician, and the children no sooner had been placed in bed than he arrived. He pronounced Madge, the little girl, doing nicely; but, as he looked at the bright spots burning upon the boy's cheeks, and felt the leaping pulse, a graver expression visited his face. Had a brother Esculapius seen the prescription he proceeded to write, it would have been understood that the patient was threatened with fever.

For weeks the unclaimed boy lay struggling with as fierce and dread an enemy as the surging river had been. Many times during his long illness, in the delirium of fever, he would bound from his bed and grapple the attendants with the strength of a dozen boys, hissing between his clenched teeth, "A rock! A rock!"

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CHAPTER VIII.

Three weeks have passed since relating the incidents recorded in the previous chapter. Mrs. Eldridge is reclining in a large, easy chair, upon her face being evident traces of long vigils. The transparent lids are closing irresistibly and eclipsing those tired eyes. There is perfect quiet in the room, except for an occasional sound coming from the adjoining apartment. The rooms communicated with each other by a double door, while some heavy tapestry is drawn back, affording a complete view of the interior of the one whence the occasional sound proceeds. A glance into the bedroom reveals a heavy mahogany bedstead, with rich and gorgeous material, while, lying upon this bed with a sheet and cover of down spread over him, is seen the figure of a mere child. Ever and anon the fingers of the boy close and relax, marked occasionally by convulsive twitchings, at which latter times the thin lips emit faint moans. At such times the silent watcher rises softly, and, stealing to the bedside, gazes wistfully at the little sufferer.

During these long weeks Mrs. Eldridge had shared in the nursing of this homeless wanderer.

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Nothing had been able to swerve her from her resolution. The silent watcher has but just returned from the side of the little patient, and sinking into a chair, partly closes her eyes. There seems less moaning from the adjacent apartment, and those poor tired eyes are closing despite her brave resistance, while the bosom, rising and falling with more regular respiration, shows the presence of approaching slumber. There is a slight noise at the door in another location of the room. The watcher starts, wideawake at the trifling disturbance, and glances in the direction indicated by the sound. It is little Madge. She tiptoes to the side of her mother and receives the caress a mother alone knows how to bestow. There is no word spoken. There seems to be a tacit understanding that conversation has been prohibited in this part of the house. After a few minutes, the child withdraws from her mother's clinging embrace, and treads cautiously to the heavy curtains where, pausing a bit irresolute, she advances nearer and is watching the fitful breathing of the boy. Her face is a mixture of infantile sadness and sympathy. The faces of the two children are separated only by the space of a couple of feet. Slowly the dark eyes of the slumberer open, and the first gaze of awakening intelligence falls upon the childish features bending above his own. A blank stare at first, then a seeming transformation, as

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there passes into those eyes the long-sleeping consciousness of a soul. In an instant the girl was at her mother's side.

"He saw me, mamma."

"Hush, child, you will disturb him."

"No, no, mamma, he saw me—the other way—as you see me now."

The mother soothed the strange excitement as best she could, until the child, pained at the want of her mother's faith, escaped and returned to the bed, the eyes of the boy following her as she approached, as though by sight, alone, understanding could be conveyed to the weakened powers of the intellect. He was making efforts at recollection. A part of the past was before him, and the threads of that past were so hard to take up and place together. He was afraid if he spoke, or rose, the vision before him would vanish. The covering had become disarranged, and somebody's leg—it was not his leg, so white and thin that a man's hand could girth it—was exposed. He thought to place the spread over it, but his arm refused to move. He attempted to rise and fell back exhausted. Mrs. Eldridge was bending over him, and, smoothing the pillow under his head, said reassuringly, "You have been ill and must remain quiet and rest."

"Then she did not drown? Oh, what dreadful dreams I have had!"

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Madge leaned against the bed and took the wasted fingers in her own plump hand.

"No, my brave boy; you saved her life, as you said you should, but"—and the woman shuddered, "you came near losing your own. Now you must keep quiet and you will soon be well again."

"Mamma, he is going to sleep," whispered the little girl, still resting against the bed and holding his hand. True enough, the boy had fallen into a deep and natural slumber. The doctor came in and looked at his patient, remained at the bedside fully an hour, and, upon rising to depart, Mrs. Eldridge followed him into another room.

"Yes, he will live; thanks to good nursing more than to my medicines," said the physician in answer to the questioning eyes.

"Oh, I am so thankful!"

This woman had stood at the bedside night and day for weeks. There had been no sign of weakness or exhaustion, yet now she was hysterical. The overwrought nervous faculties, upon the first confirmation of hope, seemed to collapse, and she shivered as with ague.

"You must seek repose, madam, or you will certainly be sick; in fact, you are ill. Here, take this," administering a cordial, "and get some rest."

The nurse joined them, and, hearing the physician's injunction, and alarmed at the apparent

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agitation of the lady, hastened to add her authority.

"You must be governed by Dr. Bradley, Mrs. Eldridge, or we shall have another patient upon our hands."

"One who has been so strong when we feared the worst," interposed the physician, "must not fail us now, when the moment of danger is past."

"I know it is weak, but I cannot help it," at the same time controlling herself despite her admission to the contrary.

"The majority is against you, Mrs. Eldridge," said the physician, with the tact of his profession.

"How dependent upon these despots we are!" said the lady, as she permitted herself to be assisted to her room, after having first exacted a promise from Dr. Bradley that he would remain until perfectly satisfied that the boy was out of danger.

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CHAPTER IX.

Clarence Clark, who is strong again, and Madge are examining picture-books, which are scattered about the room in great confusion. They gaze upon old castles, animals and poultry, produced and colored so faithfully in the books, each explaining in his or her way the impressions represented by the peculiar array, as page follows page of the joint inspection. What pleasant days they are passing together, these two! The last trace of diffidence has long since passed, and they romp in fields, climb hillocks and play games with the energy habitual to children of their age. The boy is belabored with tasks of all sorts as the wilful girl glides from one fancy to another in whimsical caprice. He draws her, all bundled up, on the sled; steers as they descend the hillside on the coaster, and, in fact, has already recognized the supremacy of the little tyrant in all those prerogatives which children so eagerly usurp, especially those that wear dresses.

“Hain’t it awful wicked to swear?” asked the girl of the superior judgment of the boy, glancing up into his face with eyes full of innocent inquiry,

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and closing the covers of the book with such force that they whacked together with a loud report.

"I s'pects," said the boy, looking at his interlocutor more or less disconcerted, "it is."

"What makes you swear then?" asked the girl, tentatively.

"Perhaps I does, and perhaps I doesn't," asserted the boy, evading a direct reply. "Anyway you never heard me swear."

"Well, nurse told mamma once you swore just dreadful when you was sick. Mamma said, 'Poor soul, he didn't know better.' You does know better, doesn't you?"

"If I do know better, don't you want me to use cuss words?" queried the boy.

"No, 'cause it's wicked, and wicked folks don't go to heaven when they die," explained the young evangelist.

"Well, I'll never swear again," he said deliberately.

"Honest bright, cross your heart," which exercise the boy went through to the entire satisfaction of the girl's notions of propriety.

"Say," said the girl, dismissing the previous subject as settled, "why didn't Leo save me from drowning?"

"Leo! Who is Leo?" inquired the boy.

"Why, Leo is a bigger boy as you," explained the girl.

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"Maybe he can't swim," said the boy, reflectively.

"Yes, he can, 'cause he told me one day, when we was down by the river, that he w'd bet he could swim across to the other side, if the water was warm in July. He said so, yes he did. He said he wasn't afraid of fishes and crabs. Say, does crabs' eyes have stones in 'em? How can they see with stones in their eyes?" she rambled on garrulously.

"Where does Leo live?" asked the boy, who somehow was not pleased at the introduction of the stranger.

"Oh! he lives away over the big ocean, and he went home in a great big ship; he and his mamma and little sister. I don't like Leo, 'cept when he's good. He put me under a box one day and would not let me out, and I told him I wished the big ship would catch fire, and that he would have to swim home among the whales and crocodiles. Your necktie is undone. I can tie ties just beautiful, Leo says." And she applied herself to the task of arranging his neckwear. "Honest and true, Leo told me I was first-rate at tying bows and ribbons and neckties and shoestrings and everything like that," as she put the finishing touches to the work in charge. "What did you say was the reason he didn't pull me out of the river?"

"I didn't say."

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“Well, don’t you know?”

“Maybe he thought he would drown.”

“Oh, dear!” shuddered the girl, “I wouldn’t want him to do that, even if he was mean in putting me under a box. Did you think you would drown?”

“I didn’t think anything,” answered the boy.

“Well, you told me not to clutch hold of you and you would save me?” she said interrogatively.

“Well!”

“And you did, too, didn’t you?”

“Leo lives over the ocean—is he a cousin of yours?” queried the boy, who seemed unable to banish the intruder from his mind.

“Dear me, no. My mamma and his mamma are great friends, and sometime, mamma says, we shall go there, when I am grown up to a great big girl. Maybe you will go with us.”

“I?” said he, surreptitiously winding up the chatterbox.

“Yes, don’t you know, you are going to live with us and be my big brother, and keep me out of danger when we go there, ’cause you hain’t got no home,” with visions of big oceans and ships in her mind. “I want you to put Leo under a box, and we will keep him there till it’s dark, and he’s afraid and begs just awful to get out.”

This proposition the boy omitted to affirm or disaffirm, unless a shrug of the shoulders implied

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that he was willing to engage in the diversion, should the young lady remain of the same mind at the appointed time. The little girl began picking up the books, thrown about miscellaneously, and was debating what next should be the program of the morning. The boy silently joined her in the work of arranging the picture-books in order.

"Mamma and us are going to Philadelphia next week," said the little girl. "Mamma told me so when putting me to bed last night, after I had said my prayers. We are going down to grandpap's. Grandpap buys me lots of candy, and nuts, and oranges, and everything, only he won't let me eat the candy as I want to. He makes me put whole lots of it on the shelf. You just ought to see the playthings I have packed away in the nursery; they're just girl playthings, though, and we'll make grandpap buy you engines and ships and other things what boys like. He's coming up to get mamma, so mamma said, and take her home. We live with grandpap now, except when we come up here. And grandma lets me have all the gems I want, and fried cakes and raspberry jam. She says she was a little girl once and hadn't forgot."

While the girl was talking, the boy was thinking industriously on his own account. This life was all strange to him; yet, he seemed to habituate himself to the new surroundings readily. His clothing was of the best material and fitted his

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trim figure perfectly, whereas his recollection recalled nothing but rags and nakedness, save the indistinct memory that floated before his vision, away off, so far in the background that it rose as a myth out of the privations of more familiar hardships of his life. He was wondering if it were true that the darkness into which he had been plunged and had groped about so blindly had vanished for all time to come, and that the future years were to find him in his present happy surroundings. The past seemed like some dreadful nightmare, and he felt that to be turned adrift to wander back to his old exile would kill him. What the little girl had said about his living with them had filled his breast with exaltation. He resolved to be helpful to his benefactress, to watch over the little child and keep her from harm's way; besides, he could do innumerable errands, and lighten the burdens of the household. It never occurred to him that the life he had spared at such imminent peril to his own entitled him to reward. His stay at the home of Mrs. Eldridge was a vivid page fresh from fairyland. He had dreaded the time when he should have to set his face resolutely against these halcyon days to take up the old life at the point where it had been interrupted. Mrs. Eldridge, herself, had never talked with him upon the subject. The babbling child had brought and delivered the message which ended all his doubts

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and fears. It seemed too good to be true, and yet he placed a blind confidence in the statement which Madge had communicated to him. The dismal past seemed to be receding, and a gilded future, full, complete, grand, rose hopefully before him. None can realize the picture except him that turns to such good fortune from the shivering penury of want and exposure.

“Mamma says we can go to the theater with her sometime in the big playhouse, and see Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Rip Van Winkle and Little Lord Fauntleroy. Does you believe,” she asked, “that Van Winkle slept twenty years, and his little dog Snyder grew up in a tree?” She waited for the boy to reply, but he was in too much of a dream himself to give valuable information on the subject.

Thus the children busied themselves from day to day. Ever in each other’s company, sharing each other’s amusements, and dividing the tasks, for Mrs. Eldridge believed that children should have employment, which fixes habit and develops character.

The following week Banker Richards came and took his daughter and children home.

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CHAPTER X.

Upon the first day of January, annually, a remittance of five hundred dollars was received by Rev. St. Clair from the banking firm of ——— to defray expenses of keeping the grounds in order. These were the only tidings of the absent one. St. Clair rose rapidly to fame, fortune lavishing upon him her choicest smiles and favors. His parishioners included Philadelphia's most distinguished church-going population. He had lived in the great house seven years. There was no part of the premises but had become dear to him and his wife. His children were born under the spreading roofs of this mansion. His happiest associations clustered and centered here.

One year after marriage Alice Eldridge had lost her husband. Rev. St. Clair had delivered the funeral address. The following years he administered spiritually to the widow and the fatherless girl. Mrs. St. Clair and Mrs. Eldridge are firm friends, much in each other's society, walking arm in arm within the extent of the enclosure surrounding the Richards mansion. These ladies planned and discussed many substantial philanthropies in this sylvan retreat. They were thus sauntering

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among the grateful shade of the spreading trees, when Rev. St. Clair joined them, holding a letter and some documents of a legal-looking character.

"Please be seated by me," dropping upon a rustic bench, "and tell me what this means," handing the letter to his wife. "No, remain with us, Mrs. Eldridge," he added to the lady, who was moving away; "you are interested in the contents of this strange communication. Perhaps you can make it out. I can't."

"Why, a letter from Mr. Reynolds!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Clair, rapturously.

Were the eyes of the minister mistaken, or did Mrs. Eldridge start and turn pale? Why steady herself against the tree?

"Really, what does it mean?" continued the lady, who had already gone through its brief contents in pure womanly fashion, getting that exclusively feminine pleasure in perusing it by herself first.

"Please read it aloud," said her husband. "Won't you be seated, Mrs. Eldridge?" addressing the lady, who was still standing.

"No, thank you," replied Alice.

"Well, it is just like him," vouchsafed the reader, approvingly.

"Read it aloud, dear," directed Rev. St. Clair. "Mrs. Eldridge is interested."

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“LONDON, August 6, 1857.

“Rev. Arthur St. Clair,

“Philadelphia, Pa.

“My Dear Sir and Friend:—You will find enclosed two deeds of the premises which you occupy; one in favor of Madge Eldridge, to be presented the young lady upon her eighteenth birthday. I trust you will use your best endeavors to remove any opposition on the part of Mrs. Eldridge, providing she interposes any objection, to the arrangement. I hope you will remain in possession until the time designated by the deed. In event of failure to obtain consent of Mrs. Eldridge to the transfer, or, upon the death of Madge, as you will observe by the terms of the deed, the property reverts to yourself and estimable wife, in which case you will destroy such deed, and accept and record the second one. I shall never visit America again. My life-work and interests are inseparably woven with London. I shall feel better knowing that the home where my boyhood days were passed, and where my parents lived and died, is not in the hands of absolute strangers. When convenient, I shall expect to hear the decision of Mrs. Eldridge. Please remember me kindly to Mrs. St. Clair.

“Yours truly,

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"Poor Reynolds!" A more jealous man would have taken umbrage at the tone in which "Poor Reynolds" was more sighed than whispered. Mrs. Eldridge walked abruptly away after hearing the letter read.

"Well, you have done it," said the reverend gentleman reprovingly.

"What do you mean?" faltered his wife.

"Offended one of our dearest friends," forgetting that he had directed the missile, and, man fashion, ready to visit upon his better-half the blunder he had caused her to commit.

Mrs. Eldridge sought the banks of a miniature lake, whence she heard the voices of children. She was weak this beautiful autumnal day, and the presence of her child would strengthen her, would drive away the indefinable something that filled her breast—the vague something, half fear, half longing. Somehow the pain in the face she had seen long ago had fastened like a blight upon her heart, and, perhaps,—but she had never been disloyal to her husband in thought or deed. Still, despite it all, there were moments during her married life when hidden thoughts at which her virtuous soul shuddered as at sin would burst like a flashlight upon her privacy. Her husband loved and was devoted to her. If the early frost of his winters fell upon the springtime of her life, it had made no ravages. She honored, revered, loved

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her husband; but, in her heart of hearts, concealed in its darkest recesses, was a secret grave. It worried, vexed her. It was faithlessness—a sort of infidelity of the soul, at which her wifely instinct revolted. She felt some culprit thing, and yet, she loved her husband. Madge was born, and the lone mound in her heart became more obscure. Maternity smooths and softens the rugged places in a woman's life. The little spark of life brings an incense of peace to the altar of our homes. Then followed the sudden death of Mr. Eldridge. Killed in a railroad accident, mangled, crushed beyond recognition, they had not allowed her to see her dead husband. She sincerely mourned his death and cherished his memory.

Mrs. St. Clair found her friend standing by the edge of the water, with an arm thrown over her daughter's shoulder. A few feet distant in the rear the boy stood silently watching them. Mother and child had long ago become a necessity to each other. By that keen intuition which children possess, Madge knew her mother was suffering, and clung closer to her parent's side, pressing her mother's hand in infantile sympathy. It was a pretty picture. Mrs. Eldridge was still a girl in freshness. Her sorrow had left, if anything, an exquisite sensitiveness upon her face, rarely beautiful.

“Mamma, why does you stand here so still and

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so long? You frighten me.” The child was almost sobbing. She dipped her little hands into her mother’s dress and tried to draw her away. For answer, the woman caught her daughter to her bosom, covering her little cherub face with passionate kisses.

“Oh! here you are. I have been looking everywhere for you. Rev. St. Clair fancies he affronted you by his clumsiness. You are not angry with us, are you, Alice? We are innocent, we did not know you would be displeased,” pleaded the little mediator.

“I come to seek the children. Your husband did nothing—but why should *he* dare do this?” she exclaimed, vehemently.

“*Why should he dare?*” repeated Mrs. St. Clair, looking her interrogator searchingly in the eyes, “do you not know?”

“No, I can assign no reason for this insult,” turning her face from the other’s questioning gaze.

“Shall I tell you?”

There was no reply.

“Shall I tell you?” repeated Mrs. St. Clair, resolutely. The words were deliberate, insinuating.

“No, it matters nothing to me.”

“Alice, it does—it does. You ruined his life. He loved you; loves you still. Make this amend; let your child accept the home of his ancestors.

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“Never!”

“Never? Have a care, Alice. You love Edward Reynolds. I saw it as we stood together in his room—the room, waiting all these years for his home coming. Oh, Alice, when my husband’s step on the stairs startled you, I saw a fear in your eyes which said, ‘What if he come and find me here.’ Oh, if he could see you now, so much more beautiful, lovelier than ever! Darling, for the peace and happiness of you both, let’s try bring him home.”

Mrs. St. Clair had stuck to her text as tenaciously as her worthy husband clung to his of a Sunday morning, heedless of consequences.

“Come, Madge, and Clarence, we shall be late home.” Alice took no notice of the woman pleading before her. Her chance for happiness was flitting from her. She and the children had gone some paces, when a light footstep was heard by her side.

“Alice.” There was no response.

“Alice,” whispered the minister’s wife close to the other woman’s ear, “God pity you—God pity him!”

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CHAPTER XI.

"I wonder what Lord Howe wants," mused a man of some twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, still holding a card with armorial decorations that had a moment before been brought him by his servant. Men who see but little of their kind in a social way, drop, as it were, for company's sake, into the habit of soliloquizing. The suite of rooms occupied by the individual about to be reintroduced was not of a striking character. The apartments, save for being large and commodious, and, aside from having thousands of volumes of books distributed systematically along the undecorated walls, had nothing to recommend a passing notice. The furniture, rugs, carpets, and such few pieces of statuary and paintings as the proprietor possessed were of a modest and unassuming variety. Still, there was an air of tidiness and refinement pervading the entire establishment seldom witnessed where these qualities depend wholly, or in a large part, upon the masculine sex.

The occupant of these quarters was fully six feet in height, straight as an arrow, one hundred and seventy pounds of bones, thews and sinews,

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distributed as we see in athletes; firm hands, white and flexible, showed that, when once an object was within their grasp, it was never released, until it served the pleasure of their owner. A palmist would have dropped those hands, fearing that they might close, to have picked them up again. No department of science throws away a chance, because of peril, to explore the unusual and extraordinary. How many men have penetrated jungles, inhabited by wild beasts and infested with reptiles, to secure a knowledge of some trifling plant to add to their botanical tree. Prudence dictates flight; curiosity lingers. The progress of the human race has given more scars and death than all else combined. Take me to a place where man has taken one step in advance, and, by lifting the foot, we shall extract a thorn. All the fruit, ripening on the tree of knowledge, was not gathered by Eve.

“I wonder what Lord Howe wants.”

We have seen the athletic frame and vigorous hands, let us pause a moment with the face; his was neither handsome nor homely. A massive, rugged head, well poised upon a neck, white and symmetrical. Different men would have looked at it differently. To some it was passive, emotionless, commonplace—to others, a revelation; but, to all, alike, it possessed intelligence—character. A casual glance, the extreme ordinary; a studied view,

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true nobility. Such mastery of self, as we sometimes see in those who have taken vows of renunciation. Has it ever been your privilege to observe two sets of lips, exactly alike in repose, separating in appearance, as the smile plays and flashes upon them? Has it ever been your privilege to see eyes, the same in size, in color, ornamented by the same brows, become strangers, as thoughts of coarseness fire the one, and the refined, lofty soul beams in the other? All resemblance vanishes, as by magic. The expression of a face is its own mystery. And, while this man's eyes and lips, passingly observed, had much in common with the great mass of humanity, a closer view invested them with new attributes. The man was powerful, and sanguine of his power. There was courage, strength, resolution in the eyes and lips, fortified by a chin, a trifle too large, perhaps, measured by the criterion of æstheticism. We see faces with stories in them; tragedies, some; comedies, some. The story of this face was its own secret, hidden well from the prying eyes of the world. It was more attractive, fascinating, for the very reason of the guarded seclusion of its own past. As you confronted the clear gaze of those eyes, you saw in them truth, fidelity of purpose, steadfastness—the dross of life well extinguished; and, yet, their fathomless depths revealed a pathos, a sadness that seemed to communicate to every feature so full of sympathy,

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encouragement and tenderness. Such a face to a man in need of a friend is at a premium. There are moments in our lives when we search among our acquaintances, too often in vain, for a face like his. This man, though young, knew human nature well, and reliant upon his own strength, he encountered life's problems fearlessly. If he suffered, he made no complaint. If he had failed in some great purpose of life—lost a battle, the fact that it was closely locked in his own bosom was a victory. If he now stood like a granite boulder before some inflexible resolve, that should dominate his future, there was no ostentation, no boast. He was alike indifferent to the praise and to the condemnation of man. It is easier to imagine a faithful picture of Edward Reynolds after looking at the brow, high and noble, covered with a skin white and delicate as a woman's, which years of travel amid the arid sands and blinding heat of India had not spoiled. Thick hair of a dark brown color, among which threads of silver were beginning to mingle, clung in close waves at the temples. The most striking feature were those eyes, large and expressive, penetrating yet inscrutable. You could have told as much of them by seeing a photograph. One would have said gray predominated; another, blue; while a third would have declared that they were neither gray nor blue, but a shade of the night time with a flash of the storm in them.

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Yet, all that had seen him at the beginning of his work, ridiculed, burlesqued, opposed, but never thwarted by opposition, admitted those eyes would light with the fire of a passionate soul and burn into the memory in the same degree that the embers back of them consumed their possessor. Still, Edward Reynolds was not a fanatic. That which he did was done because it yielded the greatest measure of happiness. Nor was he a theorist, but practical to the extreme. Whatever his life contained, to whatever fields he had brought his burdens, and struggled to cast them from him; however little or however much the future held, cast no shadow upon that brow, but the quiet purpose of his life, self-imposed tasks, reflected there the image of some god.

His must have been a tremendous correspondence, in a sense, conglomerate correspondence. Letters from the nobility, from the middle classes, from the wretched pauper element, daintily perfumed letters from aristocratic ladies, full of the insinuating suggestiveness of love; letters reeking from the miasma of dens of infamy. One by one he read them, betraying not the slightest emotion at whatever shape the contents assumed. This correspondence, these variegated letters, formed a part of his life, a life voluntarily chosen, and surprise at weakness or astonishment at degradation, had long since ceased to produce stupefaction. Mis-

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anthropists at the age of fifty had his knowledge of human nature. At eight and twenty this man was a philanthropist.

Lord Howe was announced and Edward Reynolds rose from his desk, advancing to meet him.

"I trust that I am not intruding upon one of your busy days," remarked his lordship.

"One day with another," replied the younger man, "there is little difference in the routine of my work. Your Lordship is always welcome. What, particularly, can I do for you?"

"Well," replied the nobleman, "I am going to ask a great deal. I come to go through the institution. If young men take an interest in these reforms, what prevents older ones? I don't rely much on paper talk and I always make a practice, when I want to get at the bottom of a thing, to dig down to the roots." The fact that Lord Howe had taken interest in the affairs of Edward Reynolds, or, in projects in which the latter was concerned, was by no means agreeable information to the younger man. Still, the inquiry of the nobleman seemed to be made in good faith, and as the young man conducted his visitor through one of the most unique colleges that had ever been founded in England, a pardonable pride diffused itself in glowing colors upon the cheeks of the promoter. The old nobleman was a keen observer and gave close attention to details, as they

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were pointed out to him. Room after room was reviewed, and the hundreds of boys and girls, who were being cared for and educated at the expense of Edward Reynolds, feasted their eyes reverently upon him as long as he remained in their presence. Lord Howe had inspected a great number of public institutions of learning, in short, had always manifested genuine interest in everything connected with the subject. But he was forced to admit that he had never before seen such close application to study as given by these unfortunate children, that had been picked up off the street and placed in a free school. There were several grades, besides a night school for the larger ones, whose employment prevented attendance during the day.

"How many children are there in the school?"

"About four hundred in the three departments."

"I understand that you have been very successful in finding situations for those who have completed their studies."

"It is true, we have been very fortunate in this respect. We aim to prepare our young people with practical knowledge. Such branches as we teach are taught thoroughly."

"May I inquire in how many cases your scholars have proved unworthy of their employer's confidence?"

"There were four instances last year that came

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to my notice. But the percentage is smaller than one might have reason to expect."

"What became of the young people to whom you refer, as having betrayed their trust?"

Edward Reynolds remained silent for a moment and then answered slowly, "I brought them back here and finally found other employment. I gave my individual bond for their fidelity."

"Do you anticipate any trouble with them in the future?"

"None, whatever."

"My dear sir, don't you expect to incur liability upon your bonds?"

"Not in the least."

"Do I understand you to say," continued Lord Howe, scanning the young man's features critically, "that you apprehend no trouble in the future upon those bonds, given for the performance of faithful service on behalf of young people previously detected in the betrayal of confidence?"

"I do not."

"It is very remarkable."

"Lord Howe," said Reynolds, "one of those young men to-day holds a very responsible position, and there is not one of the number, but would be roasted alive, before committing an act unbecoming a gentleman, or touching one penny with thoughts of converting it to his own use."

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"It is remarkable," repeated Lord Howe. "It is incredible," he continued, "that you pick up the scum, the refuse, the dregs of London, and make reputable men and women of them."

"I mean nothing of the kind." It was said rapidly as one who delivers himself from a false imputation. "What I mean to say is this, that these boys and girls come to me as their friend. I have won a reputation among them for fairness; they trust me and I trust them. The distinction of birth, my Lord, is given far greater significance than it deserves. The boy, that ventures upon the great thoroughfares of London barefooted and in rags searching the length of the street in either direction in terror of the police, is not such a bad boy at heart as the people generally believe. He is like all other boys. Once placed among inviting and pleasant surroundings and given a chance for his life, is all he needs. In this I have been somewhat instrumental; God does the rest. My Lord, permit me to ask candidly, would it be progression or retrogression, if the pauper urchins of London were placed in the pampered homes of aristocracy, and the favored children of the nobility cast adrift upon the streets of the city? Should you expect any appreciable improvement by the innovation? Are you not prepared to accept nearly the same condition as exists to-day?"

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"The substitution might be disappointing," admitted his lordship.

"The trouble of the present system, not only of London, but of all large cities, is that every man's time is so entirely filled with his own affairs that there is no leisure to bestow a passing thought upon the needs of the wretched objects, universally accepted to be bad and incorrigible. Vigilant police regulation by the authorities is demanded by all as the only requisite. The church has long ceased to meditate upon these victims of misfortune; while charitable organizations are engrossed with matters of larger moment. Consequently among all the various means employed for the improvement of wretched humanity, the street gamin continues half famished, less than half clothed, and in an unhealthy moral and physical atmosphere, neglected and abandoned by all alike."

His lordship scratched his head dubiously. He knew men of all conditions well, but, boys and girls—and there were boys and girls galore—really, the subject never occurred to him before that he remembered. Still, he must have supposed that there were places, proper and commodious places, for this miserable element of society.

Lord Howe was no exception. Men of all degree, professors, ministers of the gospel, business men, churchmen, and laymen tumble over this nondescript atom of humanity, without casting one

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glance backward to ascertain the extent of injuries inflicted.

Men of all degree? This is a mistake. There is one class of men that has found both the boy and the girl, that goes among them, fraternizes with them unmolested, selecting the brightest and the best to be privately instructed by old malefactors and criminals in schools of infamy and vice.

"How many are four times four?" inquired Lord Howe, running his fingers through the bushy hair of a little shaver sitting on a bench by which the nobleman was standing.

The boy thus addressed grinned superciliously and looked at the master inquiringly.

"You may answer the gentleman," remarked the teacher.

"Sixteen, sir."

"And eight times eight?"

"Sixty-four."

"That's right," said his lordship. "What do you do, sir?" asked the nobleman of another boy, "when you are not in school?"

Before replying, the boy glanced at the master who nodded assent.

"Sell papers and shine boots, sir," said he proudly.

As a result of the afternoon's investigation, Lord Howe took his departure with a better understanding of the character of little folk than he

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had ever possessed, and with an exalted opinion of the young man, who had taken up for his life work, labors, which, if the world fails to appreciate, it, at least, removes all difficulties in the way of competition.

Edward Reynolds, without coveting it, was stepping boldly into public gaze. His work was becoming felt and appreciated, not only in London and England, but over the civilized world. There was nothing original, nothing brilliant, in what he had done, no bid for fame or popularity. The field was unoccupied, he filled it. Statistics during the last three years showed an appreciable decrease in crime. Youthful offenders were becoming a thing of the past. The authorities placed the credit where it belonged; people discussed the young American, who had come, uninvited, among them, in most flattering and complimentary terms. Parliament went so far as to ask for a large appropriation, which was promptly declined by the one for whom it was intended. The committee of that august body, waiting upon Edward Reynolds, were dumbfounded. It was the first instance of the kind on record. It was a strange acknowledgment of the favors of that great body of legislators. Lord Howe, who had been prominent in securing the measure, was, at first, piqued, then mystified by the obstinacy of this individual. The committee reported that Edward Reynolds had sub-

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mitted the statement to them, in effect, that the expenses in every instance, where his graduates had secured employment, were refunded by setting aside a small portion of their salaries; that he considered it better for his protégés that the present arrangement continue; that, if it should become expedient or necessary to adopt a different course, his individual means were adequate for such exceptions; that, while he thanked them for their proffered assistance, he felt obliged to dispense with it. Lord Howe made a personal visit to urge upon the young man a reconsideration of his decision without the desired result.

The intimacy between these two men, regardless of the discrepancy of years, ripened into mutual friendship. The old gentleman experienced a genuine regard and admiration for Edward and made no secret of his preference. The latter received much profit from the views of the old nobleman, picking up a clearer insight into the questions of the day, which, while not of political advantage on account of his being an alien, became valuable as a constant source of agreeable thought and investigation.

CHAPTER XII.

At the close of one of these evening visits, near the end of November, 1859, the young man rose from his desk, stretched his limbs, and, going to the window, stood in the current of frosty air driving against and past him into the room. The wind caught the dark heavy curls and lifted them from his forehead, to be dashed back again in greater dishevelment. Notwithstanding the excess of vitality in the movements of the man upon approaching the window, as he stands gazing without, neither looking at the brilliant lights flashing from shop windows, nor at the vaulted sky, an air of dejection, despondency, weariness of soul and body seemed to invest his person, even with the shivering vapor that puffed through the window upon his mobile face. The pendulum of a large chronometer ticked off the minutes. Still, he stood staring out into the brightness of the windows—into the darkness of the sky, heedless of the one as of the other. The great pendulum continued to swing to and fro, counting out its measures of time in deep monotone. The hour hand, slowly revolving upon the dial, seemed to point toward the silent figure, as it points unerringly at the world for the

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ruthless waste of precious hours. Upon the stone pavement below a ceaseless stream of humanity surged and swayed, while, throwing off their robes in a darker sky, the stars leaped forth, rivaling each other in brilliancy. But the man was oblivious of all. He neither saw nor heard.

A small object turned around the corner some three hundred feet away and dashed among the crowd. The object was a boy. The rags upon his person did not deserve the name of clothes.

"Stop thief!" yelled a stentorian voice at no great distance behind the little culprit. Hither and thither the boy glided, holding tightly to some small brown substance, elusively darting beyond the reach of outstretched hands.

"Stop thief!" bayed the human bloodhound, close in his rear. The boy fell over someone's foot, suddenly thrust out to trip him; but in a moment he had crawled under the feet of the pedestrians to the edge of the street, still clutching the brown object securely, and, springing forward with a bound, he started away. The chase became exciting. Men and even women rushed upon the pavement to block escape of the little fugitive at great personal risk of being injured or killed by the heavy vehicles constantly passing and repassing.

"Stop thief!" the whole throng of congested humanity became a solid mass of eager palpitating

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flesh. Merchants ran to doors, while zealous clerks joined in the hunt. Second and third story windows flew open and mothers and sisters looked eagerly upon the commotion below.

"It is a catamount! The flesh has been torn off my hands with claws!" a voice cried in agony. Then there fled from the place whence the alarm proceeded the little half clad figure, still holding to the brown object—it was a loaf of bread. There was a column of men before, at the right, at the left—and, in the rear, coming nearer and nearer the ceaseless clamor of police. The boy was at bay; his firmly closed lips emitted no sound. Instinct told him that every man's hand was lifted against him. His flesh was quivering; sparks of fire scintillated from his eyes. A teamster, more reckless than his comrades, divided the crowd by forcing his horses among the people. Men lifted their hands, gesticulating angrily in remonstrance. Women hurled imprecations upon the man reining the horses. The hunted animal, in the middle of that group, plunged between the legs of the horses, crept rapidly upon his hands and knees to the rear of the heavy truck, and before the motley crowd fully recovered from the amazement produced by the daring feat, the boy shot from among the wheels as from a catapult. But the giant Hercules mounted on top of the load of garbage, swung the heavy lash above his head,

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whistling in its evolutions through the air, and, as the boy darted away, the buckskin descended with a sharp report upon his back, the knot at the end of the thong sinking deep into his flesh. Another chance for liberty! The infuriated crowd yelled itself hoarse with excitement.

“Stop thief!” Thus the gathering numbers had been cheated, outwitted at the finish.

The vast concourse jostled one another as the ill-natured, hilarious assemblage moved off in the direction taken by the youth, full of anticipation—expectancy, while the baffled policeman, joined by other officers attracted to the vicinity by the uncommon disturbance, renewed pursuit with unabated zeal. The momentary advantage gained by the difficult and perilous exploit of the lad was not to avail. An impenetrable wall of humanity surrounded the terrified child, completely barring further progress. Some brute struck out his foot against the pit of the boy’s stomach viciously, with such perfect aim that the little fellow collapsed in a heap upon the pavement. The next moment the perspiring and exasperated minion of law and order pounced upon the doubled up object savagely.

“Steal, will you!” exclaimed the officer in hoarse gutturals.

The boy, having something of the feline instinct, and able to fight to as good advantage beneath as

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on top, raked the officer's hands with his finger nails.

"Oh! you will, will you!" Hereupon the pompous dignitary of the law reversed the end of the club he carried and began to rain a torrent of blows upon the head of the malefactor, puncturing the scalp with every descent of the baton. The boy kicked and squirmed beneath the ponderous weight of the officer, inflicting no little damage upon that sacred person.

"D—n him! he has cat's claws!" hissed the officer, applying the cudgel upon the boy's head with increased energy. The lad crossed his arms above his head, seeking to shelter it from the swift assault of blows. The policeman caught his right hand and dexteriously placing the wire twisters upon the wrist, gave such a wrench that the fine wire cut to the bone, the blood spurting from the wound. The pain was excruciating, but there was no sound from the boys lips, save deep and rapid respiration. If he were vanquished, he did not seem to realize it. It was useless to make further resistance. It was the daze and pain, perhaps, but, at any rate, as the muscular arm of the officer passed the face of the lad, the latter, with a sudden movement, buried his teeth in the muscles. The crowd yelled with delight. Each spectator of that demoralizing scene felt rewarded for his time and pains in remaining until the end. The deep in-

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cision made by those small teeth drove the officer frantic. He was not used to brook such fierceness from young offenders. His violent temper obtained the mastery and catching the handle of the club, he dealt the boy a sledge-hammer blow upon the head with the large end that would have felled an ox. The jaws relaxed, the face dipped forward, the body of the boy swung around, defining a half circle suspended in the air by the wire fastened to the wrist. Then the officer lowered the hand which held the grippers and the insensible form stretched out upon the pavement. The crowd yelled louder than ever at this climacteric and concluding act of the very exciting arrest. The first victim of the boy's finger-nails, he that had cried out, "It is a catamount," leaned over the prostrate form and spat upon it.

Edward Reynolds, standing at the window above, was aroused from his deep abstraction by the unusual commotion upon the street. His eyes seemed to follow mechanically the movements of the lad from the time the latter turned the corner until the arrest. The conduct of the crowd angered him, still he gazed upon the tumult too deeply preoccupied in revery to realize the full force of the scene enacted before him. He gave a convulsive shudder upon hearing the policeman's club strike the boy's head and saw the inanimate form sink to the stone pavement. In an instant, he was

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thoroughly alert. With a bound he reached the door and descending the flight of steps, forced the spectators apart and confronted the pompous custodian of the club.

"How dare you strike a child in that manner, you brute!" He drew his clenched fist back, the veins bulging out upon his forehead like whip cords.

"He's a thief, sir," expostulated the disciple of the law, eager to vindicate himself, not knowing how serious the injuries were. "See, he stole this," taking from the fingers of the boy, as he spoke, the loaf of bread.

"A thief—a loaf of bread!" Oh, the unutterable agony of that voice!

The bystanders pricked up their ears.

"How much must I pay for the release of this unconscious boy?"

"Talk with the baker," said the officer, turning to a short, heavily built man, who, all out of breath, that moment arrived upon the scene.

"What am I to pay to settle all charges against this child?" asked Edward Reynolds, addressing the vender of pastry.

"What business is it of your'n?" demanded the officer gruffly, recovering some of his assurance.

"My dear sir," said Reynolds to the baker, without noticing the previous inquiry, "this boy has, I

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understand, stolen this loaf of bread from your shop."

"He did, sir; helped himself, sir, without the formality of a sale," answered the baker, scenting a compromise.

"And may I ask," continued Reynolds, "what the damage is?"

"The bread was a penny, sir; but society has been outraged," which was true in more senses than one.

"Will you accept this?" tendering the tradesman several pieces of silver, "and settle with the officer, releasing all charges against the boy?"

"Do you mean it or is it a guy?" said the mixer of dough, eying the coins furtively.

"I am in earnest," replied Edward Reynolds, contemptuously.

"Plank down the collateral. Eh! What say you?" directing the inquiry to the officer.

"Clinch the bargain," said that dignitary, "and cheap riddance."

The tradesman proffered his huge fist and the coin rattled as it dropped into the broad palm.

Then Edward Reynolds bent over the boy and tenderly lifted him.

"Hold on, sir, a moment," said the policeman, "until I take off the nippers."

Edward Reynolds bore the boy through the parting crowd, up the flight of steps which he had

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recently descended, and placed his burden upon a couch. He felt of the boy's pulse, fetched a basin of tepid water and a sponge, and proceeded to wash the blood from the face and head, bandaging the lacerated parts; then he pried open the mouth and poured some spirits between the teeth and sat down by the side of the cot. He had not long to wait. The boy's eyes opened; they rested upon the man, passed to the windows, the door, and back again to the face of the man. Then he looked at the basin of bloody water and the bloody sponge, examined the clean white bandage upon his wrist, felt the soft cloth upon his head, gazed at the man again, then at the unbarred windows and the unguarded door. It was beyond him—*incomprehensible*.

"Well, my boy, how are you feeling?" the voice was kind, fatherly.

The boy rose bolt upright. "Oh, my mother!"

The incidents of the past hour rushed through the boy's mind. He recalled the bread, the struggle and the arrest. He imagined himself a prisoner in the hospital, where his wounds had been dressed. The kindly faced man before him was the surgeon of the prison.

"You stole that bread for someone; who is it?"

The boy surveyed the man, the room, the furniture, the windows, the door.

"You are not in custody," continued Edward

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Reynolds, divining the thoughts in the youth's mind.

The lad placed his fingers upon his sore head, looked upon the bandaged wound about his wrist—he was trying to satisfy himself whether he were dreaming or in possession of his faculties.

“For whom did you steal that bread?—not for yourself?” pointing at what remained of the loaf.

“My mother.”

“Is she in the city?”

“Yes, sick and starving.”

“Let us go to her.”

“Are you a detective?”

“No.”

“A police surgeon?”

“No.”

“I am not under arrest?”

“No.”

“I am free to go?”

“Yes.”

“Who are you?”

“Your friend. I am going home with you as soon as you feel able to walk.”

Half an hour later a man, bundled to his chin, carrying a basket packed with bread, wine and meat, accompanied by a small boy, entered a squalid habitation in an obscure part of the city.

The following morning a boy was admitted to the office of Edward Reynolds. The youth ran

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and fell at the feet of his benefactor crying incoherently between sobs, "You have saved my mother's life—my mother's life!"

An hour afterwards Edward Reynolds was standing in the same window at which he stood the evening before; but the far-away look had faded from his eyes; and, if not happiness in that face, peace, content.

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CHAPTER XIII.

The following forenoon the usual amount of letters, periodicals, and papers were dumped upon the desk of Edward Reynolds by the postman, whose habits of punctuality and noiselessness earned him many a shilling in excess of his monthly stipend.

Edward turned to these when there was a gentle rap at the door. It was a subdued rap—one of those inoffensive raps that announces to the inmate a saintly desire not to disturb any one within—sort of an apologizing-in-advance announcement, sometimes heard at the door—you have all heard it—and hurriedly prepared yourself for an encounter of some sort, much as the naval officer clears the deck for action when he sees the broad sides of armored vessels swinging leisurely around to get better command of his frigate.

“Come in,” said the proprietor of the establishment. At the summons in walked five clerical gentlemen, attired in ministerial robes. Five meeker-looking men could not have been found in the Kingdom of Great Britain. It is truly a pathetic sight to behold such serene submissiveness depicted upon the facial lineaments of any one man, say nothing of the present number. There

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was an air of pious resignation pervading the group, singly and collectively, that would have terrorized the most hardened criminal.

"To what, gentlemen, am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" This was asked after an interval of several moments' silence. At which direct reference to the nature of the meeting the lugubrious expression of melancholy deepened upon their faces, while one or two, evidently the spokesmen of the number, cleared the throat to explain the object of their presence.

"We are members of a—a——"

"Committee," said the second spokesman.

"Yes, sir, 'committee' regularly appointed to—to——"

"Consult," prompted the brother.

"To—to *confer*," continued the speaker with a strong accent on the second syllable, glancing at the interrupting offender forgivingly, "to confer together upon a matter of gravest consequence to the established Church of England."

"I have received no notice of any conference," said Reynolds, "and am at an utter loss to account for such—an informality," the word he had in mind, but refrained from speaking, being "rudeness." "I am not in excellent favor with the church at present, it seems, if one may judge by appearances."

"We regret to confirm your suspicions," re-

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marked one of the visitors dolefully, "but we hope the present meeting may be fruitful of results which shall be the humble means of your submission and restoration to favor."

The speaker was sincere. Reynolds never indulged levity with honest, sincere men. Differences of opinion extend beyond secular affairs, and, while he heartily wished the reverend gentlemen might have seen their duty leading past his door, he resolved to get out of his present dilemma as gracefully as circumstances would permit.

"Well, my friends, I suppose you are come to prefer charges against me. I am confident we shall arrive at a better understanding." He spoke cheerfully.

"We are greatly encouraged by our reception," said Mr. Hardsides, the chairman of the committee; "some of our brothers feared indignities."

"Indeed!" an arching of the eyebrows. "Oh, no, hardly that. I always take it this way, if there are misunderstandings, the first thing to do is exactly as we are about doing—see if there is not some prospect of arranging a compromise satisfactory to all parties concerned, and, failing to reconcile the dispute, secondly to adopt measures looking toward the nearest possible agreement. Therefore, gentlemen, if you will proceed directly with your grievance, we shall soon know if our

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troubles are beyond a speedy settlement." His voice was resonant with conciliation.

The good nature of Reynolds, which, even those reverend gentlemen tacitly admitted to themselves, was somewhat taxed by the preliminary informality of the visitation, disarmed all resentment; and the clergymen commenced business without further beating of the bush, a trifle more predisposed in favor of the apostate.

"The report is circulated among churchmen," began Hardsides in a more natural tone of voice, "that the religious exercises of your college are extremely irregular; that, while a number of encyclicals have been addressed to you by the heads of the church, directing that the uncanonical practices be discontinued, you persist in committing, not only the old offences, but fresh ones." There was an ecclesiastical ring in his voice.

"I am afraid there has been some slight misrepresentation," said Reynolds.

"Our information is received from most reliable sources, from gentlemen of unquestioned veracity and Christian sentiment."

"Possibly; but, gentlemen, I neither doubt the honesty nor motive of your action. In fact, I am convinced you, and those whom you represent, are actuated by most laudable incentives."

"Thank you, sir," more than one voice being heard. They spoke rapidly. Some of the com-

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mittee were already beginning to think that the reports derogatory of Edward Reynolds were greatly exaggerated. He was such an agreeable man.

"And therefore," continued Reynolds, "I am grateful, inasmuch as we are met together, for this opportunity of setting myself right once more in your good opinions."

"It is only human to err," said one of the committee, who had not volunteered to speak before.

"Yes," said Reynolds, "'to err is human, to forgive, divine.' I have always considered it unfortunate for man or woman to be so nearly perfect that his or her life never knew the pleasure of being forgiven; and, my friends, if we get through this world without needing this divine gift of forgiveness, there is little to our credit or discredit. If I cannot obtain your entire approbation," he continued, "as I trust to do, you will, at least, be as lenient as your charitable vocation permits."

"Indeed we shall," replied Mr. Hardsides, the most sanctified individual of the party, taking it for granted that there was much of omission and commission to be pardoned.

Feigning not to notice the implied pardoning powers to be brought into direct requisition, Reynolds continued: "First on the program, my good friends, let me offer you such cheer as the establishment affords, after which we will inspect the premises, when I shall be only too delighted to

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, avail myself of any valuable suggestions you may be pleased to offer."

Notwithstanding the favorable opinion many of the committee had formed of Reynolds, since coming in personal contact with him, their prejudices were not prepared to make surrender to the extent of breaking bread with the reputed heretic, however pleasantly mannered he might be. There are amenities to be accepted, and amenities to be rejected.

"We must not trespass," commenced Mr. Hardsides.

"We must not trespass," echoed from one to the other, until it resembled the veritable refrain of reverberation.

"We must not trespass upon your hospitality," repeated Mr. Hardsides, "indeed we must not. Besides, sir, I fear we—we are already forgetting the—the——" he disliked to recall the unpleasantness of this visitation.

"Well, as you like, my friends; only, when my visitors are to my liking it always seems more homelike if grace is said before parting. Still, perhaps," contemplating them benignly, "as I see in some of your kind faces 'business first—pleasure afterwards!'"

"Duty is our mistress," said Hardsides.

"We must not be circumvented," whispered one brother to another.

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"His manner is pleasant—even fascinating," answered the brother addressed, *soto voce*. The last speaker was younger by several years than the other.

"Be not deceived; Satan has a fine exterior," replied the man of God admonishingly.

"Oh, one favor, gentlemen—how stupid of me, I had quite forgotten! Before considering my heterodoxy further, let me inquire if there are any among you unfamiliar with the methods of educational and religious training of the college?" No one knew better than the questioner that not a single one of the five men before him had ever condescended to investigate the school which he had founded, nor to have been present at any of his Sabbath discourses.

The silence following this innocent inquiry was finally broken by the somewhat feeble admission that the visitors had not had the pleasure, but hoped, at no distant day, to avail themselves of the privilege of inspecting the institution.

"Oh!" replied the young diplomat, his face seeming to brighten, "I know how busy the life of a clergyman is—this to do, that to look after. And still, my friends, you are aware, of course, that there are so-called critics of the minister who profess to see in his duties and labors only the most indolent and agreeable occupation. Nor is this class of critics confined to the rabble exclusively.

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, There are men whose judgment upon most subjects is entitled to respect, that are claiming the clergyman's life as one of ease and luxury. I never thought so much about it as I have since giving my Sunday talks to the boys and girls. You see, these little people are not the best-dressed, and feel a shyness in going to church, such as presided over by yourselves, for instance, contenting themselves with the talks I give them. I try hard to inculcate morality and Christian spirit. I felt unworthy for the work at first; but I was resolved these little shavers should cultivate habits of attending divine service Sundays. If the habit is formed in childhood, it becomes a life-long practice. Dear me, such times as I had! I tried to engage a regularly ordained minister to preach. You hardly thought this, did you, gentlemen? Well, I did, and many applicants, attracted by the salary I offered, paid me their respects. But after examining the situation, somehow or other negotiations never materialized. Well, candidly, I can hardly blame them very much. There is a good deal uncanny and uninviting in the prospect. Still, as I told you, I had set my heart on the matter, and, not being able to do the best thing, was by no means discouraged from doing the next best. It was sheer force of circumstances that drove me into the pulpit, and I should cheerfully add two hundred pounds per annum to either of your pres-

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ent salaries as an inducement to relieve me of evangelical responsibilities. I heartily wish I could transfer this charge to clergymen of such acknowledged accomplishments," bowing significantly to his visitors. The proposition remains to this hour unaccepted.

To relieve the manifest embarrassment of his callers, the obliging host remarked, as though correcting an oversight of his own:

"Oh, what folly in me to commit myself to such a proposition without first having shown you the advantages and disadvantages, so to speak, of the appointment."

Those two hundred pounds extra might have accentuated the desire to accompany Edward Reynolds; but, be that as it may, the visitors rose with alacrity and followed close upon the heels of the individual whom they had come to threaten with excommunication unless his unregenerate heart repented. In a large, cheerful hall, some hundred small children were gathered. Perhaps the children were not so well dressed as it had been their privilege to notice upon other occasions; yet, the appearance of the young assemblage was far from being repellent. Each little face was clean and hair well combed. Perfect order and decorum prevailed in the apartment. The teacher having the children in charge came forward to welcome his visitors, and took such excellent pains to fix

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their attention upon all the principal features of the school during the brief absence of Reynolds, who had excused himself for a few moments, that the members of the committee were delighted with their entertainment.

Edward Reynolds was no exception. He knew the weakness of the clergy as well as another. He gave directions to his servant to repair to Franklin Bros., then the most popular caterers of the city, and engage a spread for six persons, and that no expense was to be spared. The consternation of the good lady was depicted in every feature at this extraordinary extravagance of her master. However, she departed on her errand in haste, while Reynolds returned to his visitors.

"Well," said he, "what do you think of the Primary Grade?"

The gentlemen gathered about him. They had forgotten, in no small measure, their sour grapes.

"We are more than pleased. What perfect order!" confessed one of the number.

"I never saw children giving such close attention to study," said another.

"Professor Smith has been very obliging to us," said the third, bowing gratefully to the person indicated, who, in return, acknowledged the compliment.

"I notice the light and ventilation are arranged in accordance with the most scientific methods,"

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said number four, who was of a family of architects.

Hardsides was somewhat propitiated, but said nothing in favor of, or derogatory to, anything he had seen or heard. He was suspending judgment until the finish. He did not propose to be chloroformed.

The instructors in each of the departments had proceeded with recitations during the presence of the visitors, and the gentlemen were compelled to acknowledge that the scholars were a credit to the school, as the school to the founder. Among the three hundred pupils in the several departments visited, not one instance had been detected where a reprimand was deserved. The boys and girls were taught in separate rooms, the studies being the same for both, with the exception that the young ladies were given instruction in the culinary art.

Mr. Hardsides had taught school when a young man, the proceeds from which labor were used in his college career; and, as he moved about, his practical eye analyzed everything coming under its observation. He admitted the rectitude of the school; approved the recitations, liked this, liked that; but he rarely canonized. It was not the first good school he had seen in his day; discipline was no stranger. The founder of that school might be eccentric, good, even; but he had seen eccentric and good men before who were great blasphemers.

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“Please step this way,” said Reynolds, who was standing by the window, looking out upon the street.

The gentlemen obeyed. A number of men were unloading bundles of something from covered vehicles to the pavement. Several hundred boys were standing orderly about the heaps. A dozen men were busy distributing the bundles.

“Edward Ford,” called one of these men.

“Here,” answered a youth, stepping forward with alacrity.

A handful of papers was passed, and the heels of the little fellow were seen disappearing around the corner.

“Jimmie Smith.”

“Here,” and the papers, the heels and the corner were much in evidence again.

These papers were delivered from the publishers and turned over to the boys, the same being charged to Reynolds; the lads brought back the money, paid it over to the agents of Reynolds, and, after deducting expense, the residue was returned to the children. Cheating was unknown. The ministers took in the situation at a glance, and laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks at the precipitate flight of the boys upon receiving their complement of papers.

“That’s business rivalry,” said one.

“Well, did you ever?” said another, pointing at

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a boy vanishing around the corner at break-neck velocity, his equilibrium being recovered at several points by clever convolutions of the body.

"I never shall forget the picture which we have just witnessed. News-boys are pretty much alike," continued the speaker, "but—heigho, there's a disaster," pointing forward, where a chubby lad had outrun his ability and was rotating like a ball, which he somewhat resembled, upon the pavement. As the youth came to a rest, his eyes caught sight of the grinning faces of the clergymen, and an involuntary grimace flashed over his features, which was no sooner seen than he sprang to his feet, bowing toward the window apologetically, and pursued his itinerary with more caution.

It was discovered that one of the visitors was missing. And, sure enough, Hardsides was located in a remote corner, engaged in earnest conversation with one of the faculty, who chanced to be a member of his congregation. Mr. Hardsides had seen him enter, and immediately recognizing his parishioner, buttonholed, and took him to a secluded place and began to ply him with questions. Some quarter-hour was consumed in this ordeal. When he returned to the side of his friends, many of the wrinkles in his face were missing. Whatever may have been the nature of the conference over there in the corner, it was apparent that "Doubting Thomas" was considerably

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mollified. Whereas before he had been taciturn, if not sullen, he was now talkative, even inquisitorial. He questioned everything, and listened to explanations with evident appreciation. His associates were no little surprised at the late turn of affairs.

In due course of time, these gentlemen found themselves returning to the private office of Edward Reynolds. They were in splendid humor, having passed a couple of hours as pleasantly as profitably.

Ministers are not a bad sort. They are the best people in the world, the salt of the earth, as it were. Sometimes, it is true, without just reason, sadly misunderstood; but, for all that, they are genuine, big-hearted men, loyal to themselves and to the cause of their Master's service. They are sponsors for the weaknesses and infirmities of the flesh coming within the zone of their benediction. If their scrutiny into the promptings of the heart is penetrating, it is to find bleeding wounds to bathe the bruised parts with holy balm. Oh! how sad indeed, yea, cheerless, wretched, would be this great world of ours without their kind ministrations.

As Christ said to the waters, "Peace, be still," and the elements obeyed, these holy men, resting their hands upon bowed heads, whisper to the troubles of the soul, "Peace, be still."

"Refreshments are ready," a voice announced.

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The visitors glanced at each other, then, without further protest, they followed their host to the dining room. There are three very important, if not indispensable, essentials to human happiness, a good appetite, a good dinner, and a good digestion. Those reverend gentlemen were especially favored in reference to all three cardinal features. When these functions unite without strife and betrayal, as it were, the comfort of the inner man is sure to be reflected on the circumference. A happier, more contented and satisfied contingent of the Church of England could not have been found in the realm than those five devout representatives, our worthy Mr. Hardsides, if anything, taking precedence.

"We are under obligations for your most delightful hospitality," said that gentleman felicitously.

"Please do not mention it, sir," said Reynolds.

"But your time, sir, in showing us the school—this sumptuous repast," proceeded Hardsides.

"I trust you feel repaid for your visit," Reynolds replied courteously.

"We do," emphasized the chairman.

"Indeed we do," chorused the others.

"Then the pleasure of this meeting is mutual." Edward Reynolds spoke truthfully. If he had felt resentment earlier in the day, it had long since vanished. "Now, gentlemen, there is one matter

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that has quite escaped attention which must not be overlooked."

The guests exchanged anxious glances.

"I refer to instructions from the powers delegating you to favor me with this visit," continued Reynolds; "how about your report?"

"Our report!" they exclaimed in unison, prolonging the gaze at one another, their eyes finally settling upon the somewhat discomfited Hardsides.

"Well, well, I must admit we are quite forgetful in having neglected the purpose of this interview. Truly, sir, I must thank you for refreshing our memory."

"I judge it was a trouble," Reynolds stated.

"I confess it something of one," said Hardsides, with embarrassment.

"Then, if I have caused you to forget your trouble, the day has not been spent in vain."

"Mr. Reynolds," said Hardsides, approaching and extending his hand, "will you tell us what there is about this report—this rumor—irregularity—or what you please? Tell us, in fact, the religion you preach?"

After a moment's deep silence, the two hands still clasped, the lips parted and a voice sweet, sonorous, musical, replied: "*To do good, is my religion.*"

In the center of the group stood the two men, their hands still locked; men the very antithesis of

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each other; one a stickler for ceremony, ritualistic, the other an extreme eclectic, liberal, unsectarian.

"I believe you," said the chairman of that delegation. "I came here your avowed adversary, I depart your ally, your friend."

"Thank you," said Reynolds, releasing the hand of the celebrated churchman. A moment afterwards, Edward Reynolds watched the procession moving down the street like a cavalcade.

"Who was the young man with whom you were conversing?" asked one of the number of Hard-sides.

"He's a teacher in one of the schools run by *that* man."

"Know him?"

"Yes; he is a member of my church."

"Question him?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He said we should go home and pray for strength to do half the good that man does whom we came to persecute," replied the minister solemnly.

The pedestrians again relapsed into silence, but a silence more eloquent than words. Each one, in his own way, had stumbled, as it were, upon the same conclusion.

Edward Reynolds returned and flung himself dejectedly into a chair at his desk. Some dozens

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of unopened letters lay before him, as many papers and periodicals. But for the singular intrusion of his recent visitors, these letters would have long since been read and many of them answered. As he sat gazing at the voluminous heap, speculating vaguely as to their contents, a sense of rebellion came into his life; prejudged and misconstrued; the very church to which he rendered such valuable service turning like a viper to sting him. He felt sore—distraught, an irritation such as he had never experienced was griping his heart. Was his life a failure? Were the sacrifices which he had made not to be counted except against him? The hand of a woman had shaped his destiny, and that hand seemed ever pointing athwart the path of pleasure and the path of peace. He felt his life cheated, first and last, by a woman—faithless, frivolous. He had been temporarily victorious over those minions of the church, but they or others would return. Their advent was the summons to the inquisition. The religious publications of London had long since lampooned unmercifully the founder of the college for poor boys and girls and the “exhorter” that addressed that pauper audience. He felt failure and defeat and heart-ache crowding thick and fast upon him. Yet, who more than he had dedicated his life to these three—failure, defeat, heartache? There were restless times when he wished to throw them off; to fly—

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escape. He arose and began to pace the floor. There was a sort of savage gesture in the long strides. The elasticity of those limbs had been formed in the jungles of India. There was comfort in the rapidity of his movements, if the struggle raging within could be comforted. The hours came and went and still the forces of the man's nature were exhausting themselves. Late in the night the old servant shuddered in her room below. She loved her master and she knew the tramp of those tireless feet kept pace with the tireless despair of some cruel past.

To love where he should hate; to be held captive to a thralldom that ever disdains the victim; to know that the flash of an eye, a golden head shall stand at the threshold of his happiness as long as the heart beats out its complement of time, never to glance except in scorn at the enslaved supplicant. Such were the thoughts that put spurs to the walker's swift revolutions. Ever and anon as he passed the desk upon which lay the unopened letters that were to monopolize him upon the morrow—letters that had broken violently into his life, controlling his conduct, governing his actions—a shadow flitted across his countenance. He knew he was not like other men. He felt his soul beating out its wings against the unyielding bars that held it prisoner. Farther and farther he walked away from those letters. If some one else

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would only receive, read and answer them! Yet, in obedience to some resistless fascination, or the result of long habit, he came and paused over them. A cynical smile, the first of a lifetime, was distorting those lips, when, turning deadly pale, the man put out his hand suddenly. His eyes were transfixed upon the glaring head-lines of a Philadelphia paper.

MADGE ELDRIDGE! MADGE ELDRIDGE! They were letters of fire, burning and blistering his brain. He shook so violently the table against which he leaned for support swayed beneath his vibrating weight.

MADGE ELDRIDGE! Then the hand that had started forward went farther and lifted the message from over the sea. He read:

“Little Madge Eldridge Rescued from the Waters of Sinnemahoning River by Clarence Clark, Who Was Gathering Nuts in the Adjacent Forest.

“It was the girl’s birthday, and a company of children were playing upon the bank of the river, when the heiress of the Eldridge millions fell into the water, and but for the timely arrival of this youth, who was attracted to the spot by the agonized shrieks of the widowed mother, would have perished. It was the greatest marvel in the world that both children were not drowned. The boy has been stricken with fever, and absolutely noth-

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ing can be learned of his antecedents, farther than that his name is Clarence Clark, and that his parents died in New York City during the prevalence of cholera some eight years ago. His brave deed, however, has earned him a home, should he recover, as the mother of the little girl has assured our correspondent of her intention to provide abundantly for his future. The little lady feels no serious effects from her adventure."

The storm had passed. Edward Reynolds kneeled, and, bowing his head, breathed fervently: "Poor Alice! Oh, God, I thank Thee for this mercy."

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CHAPTER XIV.

In due course of time, Edward Reynolds alighted at the gates of one of the oldest estates in England, and was directly admitted to the presence of Lord Howe. The greeting between these two men was cordial. The old nobleman, something of an invalid for the past two years, had seldom left his room during the last few months. He had written Edward Reynolds an urgent letter asking an interview at his earliest convenience, and had received a reply that the young man would call at the present date. The old nobleman had looked forward to this meeting, so to be fraught with big results, with considerable anticipation.

"I received a note desiring an interview from your lordship last week," said the young man, with his characteristic address to matters in hand, "and am come to learn your pleasure."

"Not now; after refreshments are served. You are my guest to-day. Here," addressing a waiter, and noticing the look of impatience in his visitor's face, "tell the servants to hurry up something to eat. You will have compassion upon the loneliness of an old man, and revive him with a few hours of your society."

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"But, my lord, I have little time for idleness, much as my inclinations may feel like accepting your hospitality; yet," dropping wearily into a chair, "I will remain a few hours."

"Thank you," said Lord Howe, recovering quickly, by no means disconcerted because of indifference of his invited guest to the blandishments of power and influence of a noble house. "I live here," pointing at the walls, "with my ancestry." There was a world of pathos in the old nobleman's voice and gesture.

"I see so little of my fellow men of late that I feel like imposing upon any and all terms of relieving my perforced seclusion. Still, I have matters of moment to discuss with you, which will take some time, and I am sure your long ride has given you an appetite for dinner. After refreshments we shall proceed with my affairs."

Reynolds was silent; he had hardly followed the remarks of the nobleman.

The escutcheon of the Howes hung upon those walls. There were swords, lances and shields with deep indentations, bruised in the service of England's sovereigns.

"Yes, I pass my life here in the solitude of great deeds and a mighty name," the old man continued, noticing the awakened interest of his guest.

"Indeed, I am deeply interested. I could listen a week while each separate history of those spears,

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shields and swords was being narrated," rising and passing from one to another, examining carefully. "The chivalry of those olden days will never be revived. I always fancy a story of King Arthur's Round Table in each relic of ancient warfare upon which I gaze."

"That," said the old man, touching a deep dent in a helmet, "that was made by the side of William the Conqueror; this," passing to another, "at Hastings. Here," looking higher on the wall, "an ugly thrust of the French, as my remote ancestors dashed against the victorious Gauls and turned the tide of battle."

The old nobleman moved quicker as memories of a noble family—inmates and companions of a gilded past—were revived and reviewed. Was the man in his dotage? No. Why, then, this outward perturbation? What potent forces at work to quicken this strange exhilaration in the bosom of this septuagenarian?

"And this?" asked the young man, pointing to a haggled sword, neglected by the narrator.

"That," and the blood seemed to glow in the old man's face as his eye rested upon those symbols of struggle and carnage, while memory swept over the past. "Those," he reiterated, "were the last honors gained in the service of England's crowned heads by the house of Howe."

"They were yours?" asked the young man.

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"Mine," and the old nobleman sank into a chair.

"Dinner," announced the servant.

The two men proceeded to the dining-room, the younger one supporting the nobleman upon his arm. The meal was eaten in silence, the elder man having relapsed within himself, while the visitor was completely engrossed with the words and scenes just listened to and witnessed.

After returning to the drawing-room, the nobleman plunged into the business in view with a manifest desire to settle a matter that had given him much uneasiness and anxiety.

"You are a very much talked-about individual," he said, as soon as they were seated.

"It seems I am so far unfortunate," acknowledged the younger person.

"I have noticed some severe strictures and some most complimentary paragraphs," remarked the lord.

"Approval and disapproval are much the same to me."

"You are an American; why locate in London? Does America furnish no paupers? Is there no wretchedness in the States that appeals to your sympathies?"

"I am an American by birth, an Englishman by adoption."

"I never could quite understand your presence among us. The amount of money which you

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spend is enormous. Last year, if the press notices are correct, you turned out between two and three hundred graduates from your unique college; and I saw a statement recently that over two hundred of these are filling responsible positions in nearly every walk of life," commented his lordship.

"Such are the facts," asserted the man of less than thirty years of age, without either feeling or evincing the least vanity.

"I can understand in a measure how this has been accomplished. The church, without realizing the fact, seeks to reach the head, rather than both the head and the heart. It may not be too much to say that it aims to be attractive and pleasing to the eye, even at the risk of forgetting Christ. In other words, may one not ask if modern theology does not reveal our Redeemer seeking the church, instead of the church seeking Him? This state of spiritual affairs may be engaging to the vanities of a congregation professing to rejoice in God's approbation, and praying after the Pharisee manner of a Sabbath day, to *prey* upon the poor the remaining six days of the week. The sum is expressed in these words: We cheerfully donate one hundred pounds sterling to purchase a candelabrum, from which effulgent rays are thrown into the faces of faultlessly dressed and aromatically perfumed audiences, but not a farthing, except in grumbling taxation, to buy bread

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to feed the starving unfortunates reduced by sickness and disease to abject penury; and, when a stranger comes among us, asking nothing, preaching another religion, picking up the fallen, placing a cup filled with hope to the lips of the famishing, perishing souls which are spurned alike by laymen and church, the advent is greeted with jeers and ridicule. Unaided, sir, and alone, you have rescued hundreds of your fellow-men from fates a thousand times worse than death. But it has borne results. The last Sabbath day I passed in London, I was one of two thousand people who heard you deliver one of the grandest addresses it has ever been my privilege to hear; and, sitting upon those cushionless benches, I saw, at least, one hundred men and women, belonging to England's most aristocratic and exclusive families, who, two years before, were calling you names, such as the 'American Madman,' 'Pauper Farmer,' 'College Ragamuffin,' and kindred epithets. But why leave America to come to England?" It was an abrupt interruption of the nobleman's thought. He could not reconcile the man with his location.

"My lord," said the visitor, "this is a singular conversation." Then, after a moment's reflection, he proceeded, "I will state, as long as you have the kindness to ask, why I quitted America, or, as much as you will be interested in knowing. But

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first I wish to correct some animadversions to which I have just listened. The church was never more vigorous—never more potent for good than at the present moment. It is emerging more into the light every day, and moving forward in resistless effort for the salvation of man. The church cannot do everything. Some people expect it to perform miracles. I am not so sure but your lordship is of the number. I come constantly in contact with such grand and unselfish lives in the church that my reverence for Christian men and women is boundless. Pulpit orators have the most arduous labors to perform. Ministers are not given the credit due them. To appreciate the stupendous labor of the ministry, it must be taken into consideration that there is no class of men in any other walk of life that has as manifold responsibilities thrust upon it. The magnitude of Christian work is so diversified that no single man can compass it. In religion, as in any science, the most difficult work is performed, as it were, by specialists. My lord, show me a true Christian and I will point to an intellect devoting its best energies to the welfare of the human race. Again, I can see no objection in making the house of God beautiful. Religion is beautiful. We should make ourselves presentable in offering ourselves to God. In entering the presence of majesty we invariably give attention to our personal

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appearance. How much more reason have we to make ourselves attractive when we approach the Designer of all that's beautiful! In answering your question, 'Why I am in London,' I have merely this to say: I quitted America March 10, 1849, forever. I traveled in India and Africa many years, encountering dangers and perils constantly. I wanted to die. I have knelt by the dying victim of cholera, and, lifting the head, inhaled the fetid breath with suicide in my heart. Night and day, without sleep, I have ministered, as best I might, to the awful suffering of a plague-stricken people. It was not to be. I had to live. At last, in despair, I asked for light. 'O, God, what wilt Thou me to do?' A voice answered, 'Work, work work!' I could not return to America. Germany? No. France? No. There was only one place in all the universe—England. England is the great barometer of public opinion and of public thought. She fixes the mental weights and measures, as it were, of the civilized world. France, while tenaciously holding to her national volatility, and boasts of her identity, secretly accepts England. The phlegmatic philosophers of Germany sing 'Wacht am Rhein' to please English audiences, and of all the Powers, Germany is least Anglicized. The Atlantic Ocean is no bigger than the hyphen between Anglo-Saxon. If I could do good in England, by a sort

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of social process of evolution, the good would spread over both hemispheres. Good and evil are contagious. Clear the sky of England, and the atmosphere of the civilized globe bears a richer ozone of moral purity. I gravitated to London for the reasons mentioned, and, in a measure, I have found that which I sought."

"You are a credit to the land of your adoption," said the nobleman, slowly.

"I am grateful for your good opinion," replied Reynolds.

"To convince you of my regard and confidence," continued Lord Howe, "I have a favor to ask of you. I wish you to accept all the property I possess, that does not escheat to the Crown, to be used as you see fit in your college. I make no condition, except that it shall be used in behalf of the unfortunate children of London."

"My lord!"

"I am an old man, without children, without grandchildren, and it will be easier to die knowing that this fortune with which I have been favored is being placed to the credit of these friendless bits of humanity. Besides, it is an atonement," lowering his voice so as to be scarcely audible.

"My generous friend and acquaintance, do you wish to increase my burdens? I have an independent fortune. With all my philanthropies, the income of the principal is not consumed. But there

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are plenty of places where your munificent gift will be accepted."

"Before you decline," remonstrated the old gentleman, "hear what I have to say: Two children were born to me, a son and a daughter. My life was filled with contentment. I doted on my children. An honored name was to pass to future ages, as I had every reason for believing. But, 'Man proposes, God disposes.' My boy was killed in India—will you hand me that cordial, please?—thank you. Years rust asunder the iron bars of nature. I was wild with grief. All the proud plans cherished in my bosom had failed. The months, years rolled by. I forgot my daughter. One day she came and, kneeling at my feet, confessed her love for a poor curate who had been preferred to the sinecure by my patronage. My passion knew no bounds. I must have been mad, for I raved and cursed. I was the last male of a noble ancestry, a daughter alone remaining to transmit to posterity an illustrious name, and she loving an unknown and worthless scion of the church! My daughter would not yield to my authority; in fact, she could not, for there had been a secret marriage. Reginald Clark was her husband, and when she told me of the unrepentant act and begged forgiveness, I—oh, it was awful for a father to do!—I drove her from the door with horrible imprecations, never to call me father, as I

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should never acknowledge her my child. But my heart was not entirely bad. I longed for my daughter. I had been both fond and proud of her. One day when I was making arrangements to follow them to America and bring them back, I received intelligence of the death of my daughter and of her husband. The letter stated that a child was left—a boy, Clarence. A pestilence in New York City had carried them off. I never found that boy.” The old nobleman was overcome and paused a moment.

“A boy—Clark—Clarence,” mused the younger man, aloud.

“What were you saying?” asked the old lord, bending forward eagerly.

“Oh, I remember! Strange coincidence—a waif—Clarence Clark—antecedents unknown—it may be the same——”

“For God’s sake tell me what you mean!” interrupted the nobleman, standing over the younger man, his aged frame trembling with excitement.

“Be seated, please, and compose yourself.” Lord Howe obeyed.

The speaker drew from an inner pocket a morocco case and extracted from one of its compartments the paragraph from the *North American*, containing an account of the rescue of Madge Eldridge by Clarence Clark, and handed it to the nobleman with the remark, “I believe it probable

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that this boy is your daughter's child, and that your lost grandson is in a fair way to be restored to you."

The old nobleman seized the paper and stared at it like a man in a trance, his bloodless lips endeavoring in vain to articulate the words. Oh, the broken, melancholy voice! Thrice he read the article, the wizened face getting more pinched and drawn.

"The cordial—quick! I believe—I—am—dy— Oh—my—daughter—her—boy—at last." Lord Howe fell forward unconscious into the arms of Edward Reynolds. Reynolds bore the inanimate form and placed it upon a couch. Help was summoned and restoratives administered. Finally the old nobleman opened his eyes and glanced incomprehensively at the faces about him.

"What is wrong?" addressing his confidential secretary. "Have I been ill? Or——" he saw Edward Reynolds, "I remember now. Walter, come here—near me. Is it true my boy has been found—say, is it true, Walter, or was I dreaming and mad again? Oh, how my head throbs and beats! Place your hand upon my forehead and hold it to the pillow—so. Yes, I will drink it, Walter. Thank you. How good you have been all these years, and I have been ugly and irritable, but——" He saw the guest again; recollection cleared the mists upon the memory. Lord Howe started in upright position on the couch. The

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old form seemed to be galvanized. "Pardon me for causing you this uneasiness; but I am young again. Yes, I shall outlive the century, if this good news proves true."

Hope, entering into the old nobleman's life, had reinvigorated the aged frame. The transformation was complete. Lord Howe approached his guest with a step light and elastic. This singular phenomena, as witnessed at remote periods, acting upon the vitality of human organs, is inexplicable. Such sporadic instances are even more mysterious than temporary youth conferred by hypnotic agencies upon the aged and decrepit.

"My young friend, I summoned you to bestow a vast fortune upon an enterprise in which you are interested, and, in return, have received a new lease of life. Something tells me that the child referred to in this scrap of paper is my grandson, and the successor to the Howe estates. You have robbed yourself, or rather the cause you serve, of a large amount of money, but have gained an old man's blessing."

"I prefer the latter. I have wealth enough with which to be bothered. Besides, no man is ever deprived of what he never possessed," said the young man, betraying no trace of disappointment.

"I still have power and influence. A member of the House of Lords wields a magical mace, and, we shall see!"

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"My lord," said the guest, still retaining the hand proffered him, "I seek no power, no notoriety. Your influence, if directed in my favor, would only embarrass and oppress me. My work is a vineyard unknown to the multitudes, and I beg to be left in seclusion. I shall treasure your friendship, as I am grateful for your esteem, but the great potentates of England and I have nothing in common. Leave me unmolested in the work to which I have dedicated my life."

"In other words," said the old man, "I would only cumber your triumph with a needless weight. You are a noble man. God bless you." Edward Reynolds bowed his head as the blessing was invoked. "Walter and I sail to America. Will it be quite impossible for you to accompany us to your native land?"

"Impossible, not 'quite impossible.' I shall never again step upon American soil," said Edward Reynolds, decisively.

"Will you come with me to the conservatory?" asked the nobleman. Scarcely had they entered the spacious garden of flowers, when the old man confronted his companion.

"What is the reason? Why this expatriation? I should die to abdicate English soil."

The question was asked so suddenly Reynolds was confused, and stood silently gazing at his interrogator in astonishment.

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“Tell me frankly and I will make it right. I have power, the House of Lords has power, and I will move heaven and earth to restore your citizenship.”

“My lord, your intentions—you are laboring under false impressions——”

“It was only some indiscretion, some boyish prank; but, if it be *crime*, I tell you, if it costs half my fortune——”

“*My lord!*” The blood rushed in crimson torrents to the haughty brow. There was a glitter of steel in those eyes. The form towered above the old nobleman. Edward Reynolds was sublime.

“Forgive me; I meant no offense. I am all at sea. You here—in England; there, America! Still, I should have known better. My suspicions are unworthy of me. They shall wrong you no more. I entreat your pardon.” The abject contrition of the old nobleman was painful to behold.

“I freely pardon you, my lord. Your offense was an error of the head, not of the heart.” After a moment’s pause, the speaker continued: “No, Lord Howe, I am not in need of your kind offices in the way of your suggestion; so let us dismiss the subject, painful alike to us both.”

The following morning an English nobleman and his trustworthy factotum sailed to the United States.

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CHAPTER XV.

"I have the blood of an Isaac Walton in my veins for a week," declared Banker Richards, letting the newspaper which he had been reading slip through his fingers to the floor with a rustling sound not unlike the splash of a cascade where speckled beauties disport.

"Alice," he continued, addressing his daughter, "get your mother in shape for a rough-and -tumble in the woods, and we shall start for your summer cottage among the hemlock 'Spines' of the Sinnehahoning. Better invite the St. Clairs."

"Please, papa, let us go by ourselves." It was spoken rapidly. Banker Richards looked at his daughter in surprise.

"Well, as you and mother decide." Mother settles all questions at variance.

"We see so much company," commented the arbitratix, consulting the wishes of both, "perhaps we had better invite them a couple of weeks later. By that time, maybe, we will have tired of ourselves."

"I'm agreed," assented the banker. "When shall we start?"

"Let's see! To-day is Wednesday. How

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would brook trout do for breakfast Saturday morning?" quizzed Mrs. Eldridge, who was very partial to these annual visits to "The Spines."

The mansion erected on the headwaters of the Susquehanna by Llewellyn Eldridge the last year of his life had been christened "The Spines."

"Capital!" cried the banker. "I'll telegraph the steward we are coming."

And sure enough, a great platter of brook trout, served in the old delicious way, steamed from the center of the breakfast table at "The Spines" Saturday morning, about which were seated five happy individuals, being Mr. Richards and wife, his daughter, grandchild and Clarence Clark.

"Give me squabs and trout," declared Banker Richards, "as the choicest game; don't you say so, sir?" addressing the boy, who had hung at the heels of the speaker along the streams the day previous with the fidelity of a greyhound.

"I don't know what are squabs," admitted the boy.

"Squabs are young wild pigeons. Say, Madge, you will be an early victim of dyspepsia," heaping another generous supply of fish upon the plate extended in his direction by little chubby hands. "What voracious appetites young people possess!"

"And some older ones, too," smiled Mrs. Richards, glancing at the china, well decorated with trout, in front of her husband.

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"I plead guilty to the charge," said the banker, placing a fine brown trout upon the plate of his wife, which was the third or fourth visit that piece of table service had made for replenishment.

"Somehow, I declare, I do have the appetite of a wolf whenever I come here."

"Only the appetite, papa?" said Alice, demurely.

"I'll find a slippery stone in the middle of the stream for you to step upon, Monday, to pay for that," said the banker. "That is *casus belli*."

Monday was set for all parties to camp out for the day. The foreman, who had been in the employ of Llewellyn Eldridge, and the foreman's wife had been invited to join in the day's sport, as well as the local minister and his estimable lady.

These visits of the Richardses were looked forward to by the scattered inhabitants with much expectancy. There was scarcely a settler for miles that had not been employed in some capacity by Llewellyn Eldridge, and the munificence of the old banker and of Mrs. Eldridge was of such substantial proportions as to cause general rejoicing. Every morning the inquiry was made at "The Spines": "Does Mr. Richards fish to-day? If so, what stream?" There was not a man or boy for miles that could have been tempted to cast a hook in the brook indicated, it being the exclusive

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, privilege of the banker to fish along those banks that day.

Of all the persons sharing in the day's sport that Monday, none were more enthusiastic than little Madge and Clarence. They were all bluster and excitement from the time the canvas tent was loaded upon the heavy democrat wagon early in the morning until the homeward return at nightfall. It was they that clapped hands when the squirrels jumped from limb to limb above their heads, as the horses trotted over the old road through the forest. No woodbine nor flower escaped their bright eyes—eyes which, ever and anon, cast covetous glances at the large earthen jars wherein were packed the choicest morsels for refreshments. Arriving at their destination, they watched the workmen drive posts in the ground about which to fasten cords of the tent, volunteering many suggestions of no great value to the laborers. They helped pull the rope over the pulley when the canopy was lifted in position, the importance of the little lady increasing in her own estimation, at least, even if the progress of affairs was not hastened by her officiousness. Clarence was commanded to do this—to do that, as her vigilant eyes constantly detected work, needful and otherwise, to be done.

"Ain't it cosey!" she exclaimed rapturously, pirouetting gayly upon the rugs covering the ground within the inclosure. Then, too happy to

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contain herself in any one occupation, she cried, "Let's go get mamma and grandpa," darting off in the direction of some ladies, with the boy in close pursuit. But "grandpa" and the male members of the party had long since been landing the fin tribe in a manner to their entire satisfaction.

"Everything is up," cried the little girl, "and Clarence and me is awful hungry." Her dismay, when told it would be hours before lunch, was somewhat dispelled by a handful of cookies from one of the cadaverous jars, which had already been conveyed from the wagon to a snug corner of the tent. These were no sooner devoured than the young lady was seized with a fit to do some of the fishing herself. Her dignity was considerably affronted when informed that no special bamboo rod "in joints," with reel and line, had been provided for her ladyship. She was consoled, however, when Clarence told her she could use "his'n," and he would cut a rod from a bush. Miss Madge was very bold over putting worms on the hook while walking to the stream; but, upon seeing the wiggling denizens of the soil sprawling in the bait-box, her courage failed, and she renounced the job in Clarence's favor, while, during the ceremony, she watched nothing in particular fixedly upon the opposite shore of the small creek, which laughingly babbled over its pebbly bottom.

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"Got 'm on?" she inquired a little squeamishly.

"Purty near," he replied, applying himself assiduously to the task.

"I'll go down to the bank and watch for the fishes," she suggested, seeking an excuse to get farther away from the execution of the worm.

"I've got him now," said the boy, eyeing the hook satisfactorily. "Hold on," he cried, "you'll scare the trout. Now look here," he directed, "you sly up to the roots of that maple, where the water turns and crosses the other way, and drop over in the deep hole. I'll cut a fish pole and be fishing along with you quicker than you can say 'Jack Robinson.'"

Madge gave close attention to instructions, but hesitated, shrugging her little shoulders at the thought of taking the proffered rod.

"What's the matter?" asked the boy.

"Nothing, only I'll just watch you fish," circling about the boy in such a manner that she and the worm were fenced apart by her escort.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the boy in disgust. "Here, now, you just do as I say," putting the rod in her reluctant hands and repeating previous directions. "Bravo!" he shouted as he followed her admiringly with his eyes. "I'll be back in a jiffy," darting toward a clump of underbrush. He was trimming a small ironwood, when he heard Madge screaming at the top of her voice.

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"Clarence! Come quick! Somethin's biting the worm all to pieces." She was pulling with all her strength on the big end of the bamboo rod, which was arched like a rainbow above her head.

"Hold on, hard," yelled the boy encouragingly, running toward her as fast as his legs would carry him, dragging the ironwood by his side. "You've got 'm hooked; pull 'm out. Now, he-o-he!"

"Oh, dear, I can't! There, he's going down the stream with the poor worm in his mouth." The girl gave an involuntary shudder.

"Let me take the pole; I'll learn him a trick." And suiting the action to the word, he darted around the maple, waded through the shallow water of the riffle, and dexterously leading the trout to the gravelly bar and gradually putting more muscle on the rod, he saw the big fellow going faster and faster through the water, when, with all his strength, the boy tugged upon the pole, and the fish floundered on the shore.

"Ain't he a bute?" hilariously shouted the boy, bearing the trophy to the side of the girl. "There is your catch," eying her proudly; "ain't he an old gee-wholliper?"

"Get the worm out of his mouth, quick!" screamed the girl, compassionately, "he'll kill it."

"The worm is killed already; it's the hook in the trout's nose," said the boy in a superior way.

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"I don't want to fish any more," said Madge decidedly.

"Why not?"

"Cause it's cruel."

"Oh, it's fun!" laughed the boy.

"Maybe it is for boys," said the girl reflectively, "but girls has some feelin's."

The trout had torn the bait into shreds, one of which protruded from its gaping mouth. The sight was too much for the young lady, and seizing the bait-box with its vermicular contents, she industriously bored a hole in the soft mulch with the tiny heel of her shoe, and dumped Messrs. Worms in the miniature excavation, covering them with the displaced earth.

"There now," she said, turning to the surprised youth, "don't you touch one of them."

While the boy was perfectly incapable of sharing the sentiments of the little defender of the *genus vermes*, he had no intention of disobeying royal orders delivered with such vehemence.

"How would you like to be strung on a hook and be torn in bits like that?" she said, pointing at the unfortunate worm in the mouth of the fish.

The boy was a little doubtful of his ground, and silently proceeded to extricate the steel wire from the nose of the fish, which had ceased its strugglings, when, cutting a crotched twig, he strung one of the tines through the gills.

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"He's a two-pounder all right," disdaining to notice the remarks of his more conscientious companion, mentally weighing the fish with his hand.

"Hello!" said he, glancing at the lowering clouds, "thunder and lightning! Maybe we had better git for cover."

But scarcely had they gone a dozen rods, when the rain in great drops began to descend upon the leaves above their heads. The sky was dark and forbidding, while the wind whistled and soughed among the branches of the primeval forest.

"Guess we are 'lected for a ducking, surer'n blixen," said Clarence, glancing about in search of some shelter for the girl, who was timidly clinging to his hand. "Don't be afraid, Madge"; then, after a moment's pause, "See, maybe the storm has passed round," gazing at the scudding clouds, sweeping from mountain to mountain across the valley. Suddenly the drops renewed their tattoo upon the canopy of dense foliage above them.

Crash! Bang! The artillery of heaven broke loose from fortifications of the dark clouds, and the rain began to pour in torrents from flood-gates above.

"Here, quick! put this on!" pulling his coat over the trembling girl, which quite enveloped her diminutive form. "There, now, that's better," drawing his felt hat over her sunny curls. "We'll get behind this big hemlock, and let her thunder

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and lighten to her heart's content." He placed his arm about Madge, and interposed his body between her and the raging elements.

"Don't shiver so, Madge; this is—is fun," wiping away as best he might with his disengaged hand the water beating against his face.

Miss Madge failed to share his enthusiasm. The boy was drenching wet. Adding to the terror of the storm, the mammoth trees creaked and groaned as though in mortal agony, ever and anon the less firmly rooted giving way, and striking a neighbor tree with its momentum, they would crash to the ground, making the earth tremble with the fall of their combined weight. The atmosphere became suddenly cool, and hail, the size of hickory nuts, tumbled out of the clouds, increasing their peril.

"Kick your toes against the tree, Madge, if they're cold," said the boy, struggling with all his might to keep his teeth from chattering. "Don't shake so. Say, Madge, say 'I ain't afraid' three times. Now, 'I ain't afraid,' once."

"I ain't afraid," dubiously piped a voice next the tree.

"'I ain't afraid,' twice," dictated the lad.

"I ain't afraid."

"'I ain't afraid,' three times," prompted the boy.

"I ain't afraid *three times*," shivered the girl.

"Yonder they are," cried the banker, hurrying

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forward, accompanied by the steward, well provided with mackintoshes.

"You're the genuine stuff," said Mr. Richards, patting the boy's head; "you've kept her dry as a powder-horn."

The girl was crushed in a rubber coat, lifted by the steward and borne away toward the tent, while the boy placed his recovered hat over his head and slid into one of the mackintoshes.

"What's this?" asked the banker, detecting the trout.

"Oh! Madge caught him, sir," replied the boy.

"It's the largest trout I ever saw," examining the fellow admiringly, his passion for fishing by no means abated by the raging storm. "I'll carry him. Now, then, let us get out of this," and suiting the action to the word, the old gentleman started for the tent, with the boy trudging close in his wake.

Upon their arrival at camp, they found dinner in course of preparation over a crackling fire. Despite the inclemency without, all was warm and dry within. The incidents of such a day thaw out the rigors of life's exclusive caste, restoring conditions of equality, and going far toward reducing the artificial distance between the poor and the rich, the weak and the powerful. The children's appetites were none the worse for exposure, the aversion of the little girl for trout

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on the hook entirely disappearing before those on the platter. It was quite dusk when the pleasure-seekers reached "The Spines."

"There are two gentlemen in the library waiting to see you, sir," said the housekeeper to Banker Richards as the party approached the porch, where she had stationed herself. From this position she not only commanded a long stretch of the highway with those vigilant eyes, but the interior of the library as well. There was an expression of displeasure upon the man's face. "I told them, sir, that you saw no one here, unless a few intimate friends dropped in occasionally. Indeed I did, sir, but they said their business was urgent, and more with Mrs. Eldridge than you, sir; and so, not knowing exactly what to do, I invited the strangers to be seated in the library until your return; besides, sir, the gentleman gave me this (exhibiting a gold coin). It is English money. They are foreigners."

"Well, you did quite right under the circumstances," said the banker, anxious to check the garrulity of the old domestic.

"Thank you, sir," balancing the coin on the tips of her fingers.

Mr. Richards went directly to the library. Both gentlemen rose upon his entrance.

"This is Mr. Richards, I believe, whom I have the pleasure of addressing?" The banker replied

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in the affirmative. "I have been favored," continued the stranger, "with a letter of introduction," bowing and extending an official envelope, which the banker opened by removing the seal and perused thoughtfully. As he finished the brief letter, he stepped forward.

"I am glad to make your acquaintance, Lord Howe," shaking hands cordially with the old nobleman.

"This is Walter Haskell, my private secretary," said Lord Howe, presenting his faithful old servant to the banker.

"My dear sir," continued the nobleman, "the importance of this visit is its own apology. I can assure you that no mere business matter could have induced me to invade your privacy. I am well aware how gentlemen of affairs value the few privileged days when the cares of business are cast off; but, sir, my visit affects me very deeply, and I may hope, if my information proves true, that, owing to services rendered your daughter and grandchild, your joy upon being made acquainted with the connections of the boy to whom you owe so much will secure me ample pardon for this intrusion."

"Whatever, my lord, may be the object to which I am indebted for the honor of this visit is already acknowledged; but let me beg you to yield the question until refreshments are served. You come from Philadelphia, and must be both tired and

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hungry. Our accommodations are somewhat limited, but you——”

“Believe me, sir, we do not wish to inconvenience you in any way.”

“But you will—in fact you are at a disadvantage—you are compelled to share such hospitality as we afford. There is really no hostelry here where you can find lodgings, and the passenger train does not return to Philadelphia until 10 A. M. to-morrow. Consequently, my lord,” said the banker affably, “I am going to order your luggage brought.” And despite the protestations of his visitor, the banker directed his steward to drive to the station and bring any baggage belonging to the nobleman and his servant.

“Now, sir, if you will kindly excuse me for a few moments I shall change these damp clothes.”

“How inconsiderate of me to have detained you! It seems there is no alternative but to accept the offer of your hospitality, but I trust I may not always remain your debtor. I shall catch you in England yet. I am extremely anxious, however,” he said, his voice becoming more serious, “to meet your daughter, Mrs. Eldridge, and the boy, Clarence Clark.”

“What’s in the wind?” mused the banker as he hastened to his room; “this is mystifying.”

“Where are you going?” asked a boyish voice.

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"In here," replied the little girl.

"May I come?"

"Course," and the children, who had changed their garments, pushed open the library door and stepped into the room.

The eyes of Lord Howe became riveted upon the face of the boy, his aged features working convulsively, while a pallor like that of death spread over his countenance. He made one or two efforts to rise, but his trembling limbs refused to support their weight. The tension was devouring him. Hope one minute, fear the next; he had been living three weeks in alternate transports of joy and depths of despair.

"My lord, you are alarming the children; control yourself," whispered the secretary, bending over the recumbent form.

"My God, my dead boy come back to me!" gasped the nobleman.

The girl dimly comprehending the scene, retreated timidly to the side of Clarence. Already she had learned to place a blind faith of security in her protector.

Lord Howe recovered himself by a superhuman effort. He smiled at the confiding trustfulness of the little girl; but the clear gaze of the boy—those eyes were so keen and intelligent—no one knew better than himself that it would be difficult in hiding a purpose from them.

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“Will you not come and shake hands with me?” asked the nobleman reassuringly.

“Yes, sir,” said the boy leading the somewhat reluctant girl.

The nobleman took a tiny fist in each of his hands. It did him good. Their young blood seemed to infuse vitality in his old stagnant veins. Walter looked upon the proceedings with satisfaction.

“Well, sir, my little boy, what is your name?”

“Clarence,” replied the boy, promptly.

“Clarence——?”

“Clarence Clark,” added the boy, coloring to the roots of his hair.

“How old are you, Clarence?”

“Twelve years, sir.”

“What month and day were you born, Clarence?”

“April 9, 1848,” said the boy, not knowing whether to be pleased or not at the catechism.

“I knew it,” said the old man eagerly. “And your father and mother?”

“I hain’t got no papa and mamma,” said the boy sadly, “I ain’t like other boys.”

“Yes you is too,” said the little girl, “your papa and mamma is in heaven. Mamma said so when I asked her.”

The boy, whose religious culture had been some-

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what neglected, bowed acquiescence to the correction.

"Was your father's name Reginald and your mother's Mary?" asked the old man, turning his face partly away to hide his emotion.

"Yes, sir."

It was some moments before the old gentleman spoke again. He seemed to be breathing with difficulty. Still he clung to the little hands confided to him. Finally he said:

"And this is the little Madge, whom you saved from drowning?" resting his eyes upon the sweet face of the girl.

"Yes, sir," said the boy, shrugging his shoulders, and casting a swift glance at his questioner. Those eyes seemed to ask, "How do you know so much?"

"Oh, I saw the published report," interpreting the look, "you are a brave boy," pinching the small hand he still held clasped in his.

"You are not afraid of me now, are you?" he said to the little girl.

"No, sir, not a mite. At first I was, you looked so queer."

"Shall I tell you a story—a real fairy story?" asked the old gentleman.

The heads of the children nodded vigorously. When was there ever a child that did not love stories?

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“Well, climb upon my knee then.”

There was a general scrambling for position, any remaining shyness vanishing at the prospect of the promised entertainment.

“Well,” commenced the narrator, “years ago, there lived a nobleman in a great big castle, built of solid stone hundreds of years before he was born. Finally, after many years, this big house descended to one son. This boy was strong of limb and possessed much beauty and grace of person. He thought well of his birth and loved to hear of the brave deeds and adventure of his ancestors. This son was educated at home until he became twenty years of age, when he traveled pretty much all over the world during the next five years. He was a proud and headstrong young man and did, no doubt, a great many foolish things not entirely to his credit. He had, however, many good traits of character. If impulsive, he was generous; if he had limbs of iron, he never crushed the weak. He studied the countries he visited and gained much valuable knowledge. At last he returned home. Couriers, that is, men had been sent in advance to tell of his coming. For miles and miles multitudes of people gathered to welcome his home coming. You should have heard the bell ringing. If it was not the prodigal’s return, and, my little friends, you have heard tell of that in the Bible, it was the return of an

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only son, who had long been absent from home in strange lands. There came a day when this young man fell in love, as sometime, my young friends, you will do when you grow older." The children looked at each other across the chasm of the old man's knees. "He took his bride to live in the great house of stone and thousands came to welcome the blushing bride and the happy husband. It was a happy day." The old man closed his eyes and was lost in reflection. "After a while a little boy came, and then a little girl to bless that home. They were beautiful children, and the prattle of their babbling voices is still heard by the old and cheerless man, when the wind blows and the storm rages. The father of those sweet children was a proud and ambitious man. What his ancestors had done with lance and sword, he sought to do in Parliament with the force of argument and eloquence. He made a great many foes, who coveted his ruin, who feared and hated him; but he always triumphed and his fame spread until his name became a household word in all Europe. But as he prospered he forgot God.

"Then one day there came a time when the little boy grew up and had to go away as his father had done before him. He was a fearless boy, brave and bold as a lion." The old man's speech was choked and trembling. "He was killed in India

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by wild beasts." The recital affected the storyteller strangely.

"Then," continued the narrator, "the old nobleman's heart grew harder—harder than the stones his fathers had quarried and built into the walls of the great house. The blow killed the boy's mother. The proud man buried her, his heart getting colder and more flint like. He never smiled any more. Pity was dead in his bosom. His house of dreams had been broken into and the treasures stolen. He forgot his daughter. One day she came and told of her marriage to a poor curate. Then this wicked man lifted his hand against his little girl and drove her from the castle. He became mad after that. Some days he would people the big courts and battlements with knights wearing armor and steel mail, their huge plumes and battle axes waving and flashing in the gleaming sunlight, while the demented nobleman shouted orders against imaginary foes. Again, he would walk the silent halls, calling into the empty chambers for his wife and children. God had punished him terribly for his pride and insolence. After years of darkness a letter came across the sea, telling of the deaths of his daughter and her husband in the City of New York. That cruel letter also told of a son, Clarence, who was left an orphan and without any money or friends. Then the old nobleman, whose mind and

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body had recovered, sailed on a big ship to get his grandson and bring him home. Upon his arrival he found where his daughter had lived and where his little grandson was born. There was no trace of the child. All that could be learned of the boy was that an elderly lady had, through pity or some other motive, taken charge of him. The old nobleman offered rewards almost princely for information that would lead to the restoration of his grandchild. There is no city in the United States of any importance that has not been canvassed by able police, looking for the little heir, who belongs way over the ocean, and, who, sometime when he grows up, should live in the home of his fathers. Yes, the sorrows of the old man had softened his heart, and he sent messengers everywhere to find and bring to him the lost boy; but the messengers returned with no tidings. At last the broken down and humbled old man asked God to spare his life until the child of his daughter was restored to his birthright. Remorse and trouble had broken the stubborn will. He was reconciled to God, and able to say, 'Thy will, and not mine, be done.' "

Again the story-teller paused so long the silence became oppressive.

"Didn't he find the boy ever?" asked the girl, her breathless suspense and curiosity no longer able to bear the silence.

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“Yes,” it was a monosyllable.

“Oh, I am so glad!” cried the girl, clapping her dimpled hands at imminent risk of losing her equilibrium, and toppling from her perch.

Tears were streaming from the old man’s eyes. He drew the boy convulsively to his breast.

“Forgive me! My child, forgive me!”

“Grandfather!” breathed the boy in aspirates.

Oh, mysterious law! force! nature! sublime phenomenon, that baffles science, that flashes recognition along magnetic wires concealed in fibres of a common origin, until there bursts upon the sentient being spontaneity of knowledge! Oh, occult passages—winding labyrinths of the soul, where infinite vision beholds the purple bonds of consanguinity!

Mr. Richards, accompanied by his wife and daughter entered the room at this critical juncture. They paused abruptly at the strange scene. The banker concealed his surprise, and conducting the ladies to Lord Howe who had risen and dashed away the tears from his still moist eyes, said:

“Lord Howe, let me introduce my wife, Mrs. Richards, and my daughter, Mrs. Eldridge.”

The old gentleman bowed chivalrously, then, according to some sudden impulse, he caught the hand of the boy, “Mr. and Mrs. Richards and Mrs. Eldridge, it gives me great pleasure in presenting

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to you my grandson, Clarence Clark, a future peer of England.”

Their surprise changed to astonishment; and, seated together after the evening meal, they listened late into the night to the same story, repeated differently, that had been told to the children, now slumbering in their beds.

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CHAPTER XVI.

Lord Howe continued at The Spines. The possession of his grandson had produced a wonderful rejuvenation. He was delighted with the character of the boy, developed, to be sure, but imperfectly under the crude environments of his young life. The lad's nature was open, frank and affectionate. The new found relatives were united by the strongest ties of devotion. The old gentleman could not suffer the boy out of sight, while the little fellow, on his part, conceived for his grandparent the warmest attachment.

Banker Richards and the Englishman soon established themselves upon the rarely privileged terms of familiarity. The regard for each other was mutual. Their tastes, in many respects, were not dissimilar. Both had been close students, each in his special sphere. What Banker Richards did not understand about finances was hardly worth knowing, his opinion being usually accepted as final upon the subject among his intimate acquaintances, while men in public position frequently consulted him, availing themselves of his valuable knowledge.

Lord Howe had been actively engaged in

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English politics the greater part of his life, and was especially informed upon international law. He was a veritable encyclopedia upon treaty rights and obligations. Thus, the conversation of the two men embraced subjects possessing a charm for both. They would sit on the veranda in the cool of the summer days, smoking choice brands of Havanas, enjoying each other's society.

Lord Howe had been at The Spines a fortnight. It had been settled that he should remain the guest of Mrs. Eldridge and her parents a few weeks, when they should sail for England together. Alice had long contemplated a visit to her dear friend, Countess Ratcliff, but her father had postponed his going, upon one pretext or another. It was largely due to the persuasion of Lord Howe, that the banker had eventually promised to accompany his wife and daughter at the early date appointed; a circumstance for which both ladies were very grateful.

In the meantime the whereabouts of the old lady, who had cared for Clarence, when a child, had been discovered, and certain articles, belonging to his mother, restored, which removed all doubts, if any existed, of his parentage.

"Papa," said Alice one evening, interrupting their discourse, "mamma and I have stood this sort of thing as long as we propose to do. I declare when two very wise and old men get to be

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cronies, there is no telling where it will end. Don't you think so?" sitting down by the side of the nobleman and beaming up into his face.

"I do believe wisdom vanishes at the approach of such loveliness," said Lord Howe, with a twinkle in his eye, "my heart hasn't fluttered so in sixty years."

"There, that is different. Don't you think this is nicer than talking outlandish disquisitions about treaties and treasuries?"

"How vain are regrets!" discharging a voluminous sigh at the fair divinity at his side.

"I treasure the compliments of aged gentlemen."

"The cause of preference, please?"

"Antiquities are of historical value; besides sunsets are always beautiful."

"A meeting of the grim past and the dimmer present, eh? Still, truly now, don't you think the old man is less apt to cast his pearls where they are not merited?"

"Why think at all, if one is happy?" complacently.

"Well, you come to be amused, and, for want of a better, an old man's adulation is acceptable diversion."

"Mother, do come here. Our English friend and our troublesome daughter are playing shuttle-

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cock with the 'grand passion,' " called the banker, as his wife appeared upon the scene.

"Mamma, stocks *are* taken a fall and treaties *are* abandoned."

"Well," said the prudent lady, "let the spindles fly, the end justifies the means."

"Mamma, I have made a discovery. Lord Howe was a great gallant in his day."

"Nor has he outlived his gallantry," said that gentleman, trying to harpoon the tiny toe of a little boot, peeping from beneath somebody's skirts, with the point of his ebony walking stick.

"Sit here mother," said the banker, placing an India shawl about her shoulders, as the lady accepted the invitation, "we can better watch maneuvers from this vantage ground."

"Now, seeing you are both amiable once more," said Alice, rising and entering the library, returning quickly, "I wish to see you enjoying fresh cigars. There is a sociability in the weed," offering one to the nobleman, and shaking the extinguished stub from her father's fingers. "Mamma and I are not so sure of our victory over the 'change'—and—what do you call it—the 'Treaty of Ghent,' so you may smoke as one of the conditions of the armistice."

Lord Howe did not light his cigar.

"Here, sir, is a lucifer," said Alice, extending a match to the nobleman. "Now, aren't you glad





“Curdling and Vengeful”

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you did not pierce my toe, else I would not have brought this 'pipe of peace?' "

"I say, Friend Richards, we are vanquished."

"Glad to hear it," said the banker, "I capitulated nigh thirty years ago."

There was something so homelike and attractive in the picture, that the happiness of the charmed circle was contagious.

"Mr. Richards," said the nobleman earnestly, "you should be the happiest man in Christendom."

"I am," said that gentleman, laconically. The light in Mrs. Richards' eyes was heavenly.

"When I don't torment him," said Alice, fastening a rose in the lapel of his coat.

"You do drop pebbles into my pool of bliss."

"But the ripples, papa, are always catching the rays of the sunbeams."

"Pretty much," concealing her face in a wreath of smoke.

"I shall never doubt again that Nero fiddled while Rome burned," said Alice, pensively, emerging from the cloud.

"Come and sit by me," said Lord Howe, "and we shall plot a conspiracy."

"Curdling and vengeful?"

"Vengeful and curdling."

"Hint it to me. Now, mind, a real cabal."

"Lean forward." The nobleman whispered

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something in her ear, and, despite the farce, the face and throat of Alice colored profusely. Laughing lightly she asked:

"A widower?"

"Yes."

"Young and good looking?"

"Yes."

"Rich and a baronet?"

"Yes."

"The combination is good. Character and habits average?"

"Unexceptionable."

"Papa," pointing her finger at him menacingly, "you must abdicate."

"Mother, see!" said the banker, "she blushes. Brutus was pale when he stabbed Cæsar."

"But Cassius was flushed," smiled the nobleman.

At this somewhat critical moment for Alice, who should appear but the children. The future peer of England in derogation of his budding titles, was leading a Shetland pony, upon which was demurely seated a very young and vivacious lady, enjoying the homage of boy and beast with ill-disguised satisfaction. Upon seeing themselves observed, the youngsters made an unsuccessful attempt to escape, but were intercepted by the challenge:

"Come up to the veranda, where the accomplish-

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ments of the young equestrienne may be admired."

The young gentleman did not fail to notice the displeasure of his partner, but, after a second's reflection, he submitted to "the powers that be" and led the pony forward. Madge pursed her pretty lips at this wholesale abandonment of dignity and remained silent as a sphinx during the inspection of her recently acquired attainments.

"Well," said the banker, "you are riding famously."

"She has only had the pony a week," said her mother, proudly.

"Come, my lady, don't be sullen, you'll be a great horsewoman some day," said the nobleman.

"That's what I tell her, too," put in the boy, delighted at the favorable mention.

"One can't learn to ride when the pony wants to nibble at every rosebud in the yard," said the object of conversation, far from being mollified by her flatterers.

"You must use your riding whip," said her grandfather.

Unconcerned at this allusion to the formidable riding whip, which the young lady flourished over the pony's neck, that bit of barnyard furniture began picking at the tender lawn grass daintily, adding greatly to the chagrin of its rider by this fresh evidence of disrespect."

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"May we go now?" asked the boy, seeking to relieve his companion's embarrassment.

"Yes, trudge along," said the banker, mischievously.

But the pony was too much attached to the savory grass to respond promptly to the somewhat peremptory jerk of the leather thong held in the boy's hand, expressing its disapproval of the proposed departure by a swish of the bushy tail that was an uncompromising foe to the swarms of pestiferous flies.

Madge began resolutely to administer a succession of staccato taps with her whip, at which the pony protested by more decided movements of the appendage in question.

Clarence was disgusted with such gluttony, and, taking the strap firmly in his hand, he delivered such a stinging rebuke on the nose of the pony, that the Shetland quadruped was brought to a proper realization of its obligations to society, and, still munching the last greedy mouthful, the diminutive bit of horse flesh followed submissively at the heels of the youth.

"He is both docile and obstinate, like some women I know," glancing at his daughter, significantly.

"I am glad the tyrant's reign of tantalizing is nearly over—good looking, character and habits average, and a baronet. My Lord, do you wonder

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at my decision to consider your proposition of the baronetcy?" Alice replied to her father in this manner.

"I feel called upon," replied the nobleman, "to follow the worthy example of an illustrious general, who, finding himself unexpectedly between two fires, lay down until the firing ceased. It is a clear case of live coward—dead hero."

"Very well, if my confederate abandons me, I shall seek safety in flight. Say, that general must have been the one of whom it is said, 'He was invisible in war, invincible in peace.'"

The next moment her clear voice, mingled with the deepening shadows of approaching night, flooded the veranda. Song followed song out through the open doors and windows to greet the moonbeams, and to gladden the hearts of her hearers. The Englishman arose and came to the window, where he stood silently watching and listening, moved as he had seldom been by a voice. Alice was oblivious of the admiration she was exciting. Her soul lingered in the silvery cadences issuing from her birdlike throat.

"She sings as though possessed," mused the Englishman, "she has a wonderful voice."

Clarence and Madge tip-toed into the room and sat down quietly.

"I love to hear mamma sing."

The boy's eyes were sparkling.

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Finally the fingers rested; the lips closed. The woman's eyes were moist.

Fate had been generous to Alice Eldridge in the world's sense of indulgence. Birth, fortune, beauty, even to idealism, are gifts rarely vouchsafed to one person.

Above the piano was a replica of Max Schmidt's famous painting "Solitude." The soul lit eyes of the singer rested dreamily upon the landscape. Years ago a boyish lover had given it. Where was he? Was it true that he loved her still? The shadows of nightfall flitted over the painting, investing its quiet shades with still deeper gloom. The past rushes upon us unawares. Instinctively her fingers swept over the ivory keys, and, with eyes glowing with some strange light, still fixed upon the landscape, she sang the song—the "old song," the "our song" of long ago.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy shield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

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Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise
If thou wert there, if thou wert there;
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

“My little song bird,” said her father, placing an arm around the waist of his daughter, tenderly, “are you trying to make us weep?”

Alice laughed gayly or hysterically; it was difficult to decide which.

“A woman should never laugh immediately after singing,” mused the nobleman.

“Oh, papa,” exclaimed Alice, breaking in upon the reflections her song had aroused, “I had nearly forgotten! We are likely to have a new enterprise in our summer retreat. Mr. Jones, a would-be Dana, asked me to consult your opinion upon the advisability of the project; and, should you think favorably of the plan, he modestly requested me by most delicate intimation to solicit a contribution. He wishes to found a local paper and is in sore need of funds. I told him, papa, that you were public spirited and would not be outdone by your daughter. I could do no less. You have

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always encouraged me to be generous *for you*. I gave him my check for two hundred dollars."

"Well, how much ought I to give? Now look here, none of your putting on airs. You just make the figures decent and respectable."

"Don't fear, I'll make them respectable, and I never, never, never will cross you again." Then quickly she reached the solution that gave her infinite satisfaction. "Suppose you advance two hundred and fifty dollars on subscription."

"You are dreadfully considerate—this paying for literature two centuries in advance; but I'm agreed.

"We may have to come to his assistance, now and then, you know, until the paper is on a paying basis," explained Alice, preparing a way for future subsidies.

"You manage it and draw on me for my share," said the banker, who, having some village property, was quite taken with the idea.

"Put this down for me," said the Englishman, placing a bill of the two hundred dollar denomination in the hands of the surprised newspaper advocate.

"You!" exclaimed Alice, greatly astonished.

"Certainly, if it had not been for the enterprise of American publishers, in all likelihood I should never have found that boy yonder. By the way, have I ever told you that the account of your

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daughter's adventure in the Sinnemahoning, as published in the *North American*, was the means of my finding him. I have the clipping here," taking the paper indicated from his pocketbook and handing it to her. Alice reached for it eagerly. She had not seen the article.

"Don't for pity sake tear it," said the nobleman as a caution to her haste. "If anything should befall that paper, Edward Reynolds would have a paralytic stroke."

As the name was pronounced the clipping from the *North American* fell from the woman's fingers, encircling her lithe figure in its fluttering, clinging descent to the floor. Lord Howe stooped, and picking up the piece of paper, returned it to her.

"Edward Reynolds, did you say?" inquired the banker.

"Yes," replied the Englishman. "Do you know him? He is an American by birth, and a nobler man never breathed the breath of life." The Englishman spoke warmly. Alice moved away to the window, ostensibly to get more light, her heart beating wildly.

"We know, or rather knew an Edward Reynolds," said the banker. In fact, an Edward Reynolds came near being my son-in-law once upon a time. What say you, Alice, eh?" But Alice glided from the room without answering.

"Please, papa, why do you torment the child

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any more to-night?" put in Mrs. Richards.

"Was there a love affair between Edward Reynolds and your daughter?" questioned the nobleman, deliberately.

"A boy and girl engagement was all. Edward was nineteen and Alice was in short dresses. They were very devoted," said the banker, lightly.

"So Reynolds loved your daughter. I understand at last." He measured his words as men do when pronouncing judgment.

"Yes, and Alice loved him," interposed Mrs. Richards.

"No!" exclaimed Lord Howe, solemnly, "no woman ever loved Edward Reynolds to afterward love another man."

Alice in the adjoining room had listened to every word. There was condemnation—bitterness, even, in the voice of the nobleman, and something cried out in vindication within her "I never have—I never have!"

"Will you tell us about him?" asked Mrs. Richards. "This is the first we have heard of him for many years, and we were very fond of the young man."

Lord Howe related all he knew of Edward Reynolds' life, while Alice, creeping to the door, drank in the words as they fell from the old man's lips. How her pulse quickened as the narrator told of Reynolds' interview with the Queen. The

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Sovereign had summoned him to her side, and praised his work, and even asked permission to acknowledge her gratitude by royal favor, which he had declined. Parliament had voted funds, which were returned. It was her Edward—the Edward of olden times, that had stood in her presence but yesterday—no, seven long years ago—inquiring calmly—proudly: “Alice, you are sure your heart and happiness ask this sacrifice of me?” and she had answered “yes.” Oh, how cold his fingers, when he raised her hand in parting to his lips—how cold his lips—her Edward! Those cold fingers were tearing her heart to-night.

Finally the Englishman ceased speaking. Long afterwards Alice heard her parents leaving the room. Then she pressed the paper to her bosom for one swift moment, and, entering the room, approached the nobleman. She felt his great resentful eyes fixed searchingly upon her face. She held the paper out to him with her hand trembling visibly. He took it coldly.

“Good night, Lord Howe.” She was moving toward the door.

“Good ni——, Stay!” He came to her. “When a little girl, did you once pay the fine of a small boy, who had been convicted of some trifling offense, rather than see the lad cast in prison?”

“Yes.”

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"And was that boy afterwards employed in your father's bank?"

"Yes, he's there now, assistant cashier."

"And did Edward Reynolds see you do it, was he with you at the time?"

"Yes."

Lord Howe stood contemplating the woman before him intently.

"Why do you ask?"

"He told me the story. He gave the circumstance as the foundation upon which his life's work rests. In England's name, madam, I am to thank you for dedicating to her glory the life of one of the noblest, grandest men God ever created." The eyes of the woman were downcast, studying the fantastic figures woven in the Persian carpet.

"My lord speaks in parables," she replied without raising her eyes.

"But your heart interprets," he said, bitterly. She made no response. "I beg your pardon, madam. I have no right to criticise. There was a mystery about Edward Reynolds that I failed to fathom. I attributed it to all causes but the right one." After a brief pause, he continued, "Who should have thought that any woman could help loving a man like him. He is so rich in all that manliness and grace women admire. It seems, however, I was mistaken. Mrs. Eldridge," he added, slowly, "if you value your peace of

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mind, never look again upon the face of Edward Reynolds."

Alice had bitten her lip. The blood had a pungent taste. As the old man ceased speaking, she lifted a pair of gleaming eyes to his serious face, while ripples of light laughter broke from her coral lips. Lord Howe raised his hand—the hand still clasping the clipping of the *North American*—in involuntary protest, and, as he did so, a garnet drop was blown with peals of merriment from those smiling lips, falling upon the piece of paper, dividing into a hundred crimson specks.

"Where did that blood come from?" he demanded, examining the stains.

"Is it blood?" asked Alice, "please give it me," extending her hand for the paper, which the Englishman still retained. "Please, Lord Howe!" There was passionate entreaty in those pleading eyes. "I will get you another—a new one—if it costs——"

"Your lip is bleeding, madam, have you hurt it?" He was studying her impenetrable face closely.

"No! no! Why do you not give me the paper?"

"My pledge has been given to return it."

"But HE will not care, if I—if you find another in its stead."

"You still wish to sit in judgment upon *him*," said Lord Howe, steadily. "Answer me, please,

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first, why do you plead for this particular paper?"

"Because," she hesitated.

"'Because' is a woman's reason."

"All the more reason why you should respect it."

"I am awaiting your answer."

"I cannot tell you."

"I know."

"Very well, if you know I have nothing to answer."

"I am not superstitious," said Lord Howe. "I never had patience for the supernatural; but I believe heaven wills that globule of blood upon this paper for a purpose, and I am not satisfied to let a woman's caprice aid, in the smallest measure, to defeat God's plan. You want this," glancing at the paper, "to destroy it. I have every confidence, if I give it to you that you would either secure another or return this to me. Listen! Mr. Reynolds came to my home a few weeks ago at my earnest invitation. At that interview I begged him to take what amounts to a vast fortune and use it, as he saw fit, in his college. It was to be in the nature of an endowment. He emphatically refused to oblige me. This, of course, was at a time when I believed my grandchild dead. In urging upon him the acceptance of the bequest it became necessary to acquaint him with a portion of the sad history of my life. When, during the

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narrative, I mentioned my daughter's marriage and death, and the birth of a child, Clarence, my guest produced this clipping from his wallet. I supposed he treasured the keepsake because it strengthened his theory in relating to a great and heroic deed by a boy belonging to a class in which he is interested. True, I was mistaken. He preserved that talisman for other reasons. Well, at any rate, when I asked the loan of the clipping, he exacted the promise that I would return it to him. Upon my arrival home, when he demands an account of my stewardship, madam, is it your pleasure, as he points to the blackened spots, that I tell him it is a drop of blood, shivered into tiny atoms from the bleeding lips of a lady, convulsed in scornful ridicule over the sacred memory in which a certain man continues to regard a boy and girl attachment?"

"Who says the English never joke?" cried Alice ecstatically.

"Do you credit me with jesting?"

"Are you ever serious, my lord?"

"You make me regret that I am so."

Alice Eldridge burst out laughing. The next moment she was singing in imitation of vaudeville:

How vain are regrets that vex and torment us,
And leave the heart heavy with anguish instead;

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So chase them away with gay song and
laughter,
Remembering the pleasing, forgetting the
dread.

‘Oh, regrets that are vain, regrets that are vain,
Bring pain to the heart, bring pain, forever
pain.’

As Alice sang, Lord Howe regarded her in amazement, her superb voice thrilling him as it rose and wavered above the peaks of pathos. Then the woman was laughing in his face, the very incarnation of Hebe.

“Give it me.”

“No!” His face was saturnine.

“Good-night, my lord. You’ll be sorry sometime,” she trilled back, vanishing.

“Is she a woman, a devil, or just an enigma?” muttered the Englishman.

CHAPTER XVII.

“PHILADELPHIA, June 10, 1859.

“Countess De Ratcliff,

“Paris.

“Dear Eleanore:—Only one more week, and we board the great Trans-Atlantic steamer for Europe. I shall count the hours as days until I see you, darling Eleanore. A rest in your arms will do me a world of good. Mind! I want a real old-fashioned, schoolgirl hug. I am famishing for one. We all get tired sometimes, don’t you think? And the weariness of satiety is the greatest weariness of all. I was wondering just a moment ago what we would do if we possessed the option to go back to some remote period in our lives to live the years over again. Would we venture to do so, to cross the river Lethe, back to childhood? No. Would we welcome again the school days? I should be tempted sorely here; but, after all, I should reach the same negative decision. If to-day is happy, mortals would eternize it, the sun should never set; if it be sad, they would invert the hour-glass. So we come to acknowledge the wisdom of God’s plan as the best.

“What a crazy-quilt of a letter I am commenc-

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ing on the eve of our departure to your sunny France!

“You remember Clarence Clark, the boy who rescued Madge from drowning? You did not dream I was entertaining nobility in him, did you? He is the grandson and heir of Lord Howe, a peer of England. The old nobleman is here with us. He saw the account of the adventure in the Philadelphia papers, and came to take his grandson home. He had supposed the boy was dead, until he saw the paragraph. He had canvassed all the large cities in this country to locate the boy, and had finally come to accept the report of the secret service agencies, that there was no such youth. What little things, mere accidents in themselves, sometimes give forecasts of the future! They embark with us, as we voyage to Europe. Papa and the Englishman are inseparable. In fact, we are all fond of the noble. He is a decided improvement upon the dukes and lords and English butterflies fluttering around us poor women the past season. It may be because he is older. He is a trifle miffed toward me of late, however. His coolness is due to an imaginary injury I once did a friend of his. And the old *Fidus Achetes* is disposed to resent his friend’s grievance. Have you ever considered whether or no we wrong others as often as others wrong us? Despite ourselves we constitute a tribunal and sit

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in daily judgment upon our acquaintances; both those we love, as well as those we don't love, being oft-times damaged by the verdict. Still, if we err, our prejudices, more than the rectitude of our intention, is at fault. Anyway, I like the old nobleman for his loyalty to his friend. I am not etiolating, however, by reason of his neglect, and before we part company I shall take pains that his opinion of me improves.

"I am sorry to lose Clarence, after learning to love the boy dearly. He is a brave, splendid little fellow, and so good to Madge. The children will be disconsolate after their separation. Let me write you what Lord Howe said the other evening when we were walking among the colonnades of maples in the rear of the house, as the children came home, swinging their locked hands joyously:

" 'Will they be walking like that in the evening of their lives?'

" 'What do you mean, my lord?' I inquired.

"If he heard me, he did not answer. He was intently watching the boy and girl as they approached. Children soon forget. It is one of the privileges of childhood, which I find myself sometimes wishing older ones possessed. Life reminds one of a book. We seldom read a history, travel, or fiction, but an indictment is preferred against some page—the symmetry is marred, we think, by an offending leaf. And it is just a little hard to

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tell which remains more fixed in the memory, the page or the book.

"Really, you will think I am infected with melancholy microbes. I wish Lord Howe had stayed in England, where he belongs, with his great, horrid eyes that are always probing for some defect. Our aversion for each other is becoming lamentably chronic.

"Mamma is all excitement; so many things to pack for our stay abroad. We shall be absent a year or more. The dear soul is impatient to shake American dust from her feet, building even more than I upon the trip, aside from my visit to you.

"Dear me! Another interruption! The servant announces Rev. St. Clair. He comes to see me. I shall finish, by and by. Can you hear my kiss across the Atlantic? *Au revoir.*"

Mrs. Eldridge arose and received her visitor gracefully.

"I regret to have disturbed the pleasure one enjoys in letter-writing," said the minister, glancing in direction of the *escritoire*, upon which the pen was resting, still moist with ink.

"Please be seated, Mr. St. Clair," she said, motioning him to a chair. "My frame of mind is anything but in the mood of sharing your enthusiasm."

"I once fancied myself possessing an Emerson

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nian style of letter-writing, but of late years I am skeptical. In fact, I am woefully retrograded. Still, I am as fond as ever of receiving letters," he insisted, bound not to get away from the subject without claiming some excellence.

"As we grow older we become more remiss in correspondence," Alice said with a half sigh. "The unanswered letter gathers dampness, chilling the ardor of friendships which we truly value. Sincere friends are always being alienated for want of punctuality more than intentional neglect."

"Is it not probable," asked Rev. St. Clair, "that the increasing cares of life, by sheer force, crowd out the more agreeable recreations? We have not the leisure, even if we have the disposition, to continue the promiscuous correspondence of our younger days. Why, I verily believe I squandered half my salary in postage stamps." It was the only direct reference the reverend gentleman had ever made in her presence to the limited resources of his early career.

Rev. St. Clair was grateful for the circumstance of the writing material. It furnished a theme for conversation. We seldom commit ourselves directly to the principal object of an interview. Instead of the conventional persiflage—nothingism—they had profited by a bit of philosophy upon a topic deserving more extended comment than the purpose of this story will permit.

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Mrs. Eldridge half suspected what brought the minister to her home. She secretly admitted in the confessional of her own heart that she had wronged the wife of the man sitting beside her. More than once she had been at the point of suing for pardon before the fearless little woman, whose offence was prompted by love of her. It was the admission which the act might proclaim that withheld her. She should guard that secret at the sacrifice of all friendships. She was piqued at herself in her haste to quarrel with her friend. Her woman's quick intuition told her, all too well, that the truth had been surprised from her, and, woman like, she had hardened with the knowledge. She forgot that there is no degradation in love. While in her secret soul she treasured the words Mrs. St. Clair had spoken, she persevered in her display of resentment.

The silence became oppressive. The minister coughed diplomatically.

"I see a press announcement that you are going abroad," he said.

"We expect to start Monday," she replied, as a matter of fact.

"So soon?" After a pause, "I hope you will enjoy your tour abroad." It troubled him to tell her why he was there.

"Thank you," she said very sweetly.

Her amiability further disconcerted him. Com-

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ing to the house, he had planned and digested a dozen ways of introducing the subject. They were all plausible; but now, when the lady sat opposite him, every prop appeared to slip out of position.

A man never should be commissioned to undertake a matter of delicacy. In case an accomplishment requires strength, violent exertion or physical address and endurance, he may be employed to advantage. His *vis inertia* is a guarantee of success, but beware of him in complications of the finer sensibilities. He is sure to spoil it. If he is not coarser than woman, he is heavier in composition. Woman has tact; man has force. Woman will tip a crown of thorns with ingenious ferrules; man finds the length of the barbs by dashing against them.

"How shall I answer this?" he blurted out, placing Edward Reynolds' letter before her.

It was done no more savagely than another would have risked. A professor of Yale once sounded a woman's reason, who was suspected of dementia, by jamming one of Euclid's problems at her. Really, men are stupid. Still, St. Clair could overwhelm you with sermons.

Mrs. Eldridge became white as she recognized the fatal missile.

"Just as Mr. St. Clair sees fit to notice such impertinence," she answered, without flinching.

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St. Clair was irritated. "Very well," he said stoically, "I shall toss both deeds into the Schuylkill."

"Have you the deeds with you?" she inquired serenely.

"I have," he replied.

"I will accompany you in a moment," she said, ringing the bell for her maid to bring her wraps.

"I am not clever, Mrs. Eldridge. What do you mean?"

"I intend to go with you and witness the baptism."

"Then there is nothing I can do or say to alter your decision concerning the deed to Madge?"

"It is quite irrevocable, Mr. St. Clair."

"Very well, let us go," he said frigidly.

The distance was several blocks to the Schuylkill. They walked in silence, finally entering upon one of the superstructures spanning the river. They halted over the centre of the stream, leaning against the railing.

"I am waiting," she said simply.

He took the deeds from his pocket irresolutely, and, turning to her, said: "Mrs. Eldridge, by no fault of mine I am estranged from two persons whose friendship I prize most highly; but I can, at least, retain my self-respect by this act of desecration. The man has been more than father—brother—to me; the woman has been a companion

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—a member of my family almost, for years. But she shall be a party to this vandalism.” He placed in her hand the deed in favor of Madge. “Now, when you are ready, we will proceed with the ceremony.”

She picked the deed into small bits and dropped the tiny pieces over the guard-rail, which, in their descent to the dark, turbid river below, resembled huge snowflakes. Handful after handful of the mutilated paper followed each other over the iron rail to rest on the bosom of the water. The man watched the evident pleasure of her occupation a moment, and then proceeded to join in the sacrilege. As the last torn fragments disappeared, without speaking they turned and retraced their steps homeward. Arriving at the entrance of her residence, he bade the woman good-morning, neither expressing regret at what had been done.

Entering the house, Mrs. Eldridge removed her wraps. As she did so an irregular scroll fell to the floor, a gust of wind having carried it to the folds of her cloak, where it lodged until the garment was removed. She stooped, picked up the fragment, and turning it in her hand, read the name “Edward Reynolds.” It was the signature and seal he had affixed to the conveyance. It seemed to sting her like the bite of a serpent, and she flung it from her with all her might, watching where it fell and lay. Then she staggered to the

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place, and, falling upon her knees, reached for the white object, and, clutching it to her bosom, the hot tears scalded the trembling hands in which were clasped the name of the man who, in the dim and buried past, had been dear to her.

“June 11, 9 A. M.

“I do not feel at all epistolary. June is a month of languor. The scent of flowers, hum of bees and song of birds steep the faculties in stupor—a heart’s-ease and poppy variety, so to speak. As proof of my devotion, however, I mention the difficulties of letter-writing. Truly, there is some perverse element in our formation that lulls to sleep, while Nature revels in the gorgeousness of June.

“Prince, my canary, makes such a commotion I carried him off to a rear porch. He took umbrage at the treatment, but soon was the center of attraction among the feathery tribes of the dense foliage, because of his ceaseless song. Mamma has repeated the question a dozen times already, ‘Have you finished your letter to Countess Ratcliff?’ The faintest fumes of aromatic tobacco smoke drift into my room from a near-by veranda, where papa and Lord Howe are in the midst of an argumentative discussion upon a no less absorbing and intricate topic than Cupid’s pranks between foreign titles and American heir-esses. You will not expect much of a letter from

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one laboring under these disadvantages. It needs an inspiration to compose letters, as well as to write poetry, and my muse refuses to emerge from concealment at all my blandishments.

“By the way, the mayor of the city gave a reception last Thursday night, in honor of Lord Howe. It was a brilliant affair, very *chic* and swell. The costumes of many ladies were bewildering dreams of loveliness. I vied with the others to dazzle his lordship and inspire him with a becoming appreciation of American women. There were a number of foreigners present, and your old school friend flirted outrageously with them all, but more especially with his worshipful highness, the Duke of Berwick. Lord Howe abominates the Duke. He can neither abide him in his sight nor out of it. The old lord has been so good as to acknowledge his indebtedness to me for many pleasant encounters with the man he so thoroughly detests. The Duke has called twice since the reception. Each time, by stratagem, I have succeeded in bringing the countrymen together. The Duke is hopelessly involved in debt, and Lord Howe half fancies I shall liquidate the former’s obligations. The simpleton himself has a notion or two that I have similar charitable intentions. He is not the first one cherished illusions of my benevolence. I would like to see a real man once more; one above sordidness; one that does not

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cringe and prostrate himself before every woman of wealth. Some one has facetiously remarked, 'All good men are married.' Perhaps the exaggeration is within bounds.

"Well, my dear Eleanore, I intend that you and the Count shall see enough of me in this year of grace, 1859. My love goes in advance. I know you will keep it in good custody until I arrive in person. Mamma and papa send regards to yourself and Count Ratcliff, and I, your old, old friend, send floods of affection.

"Lovingly,

"ALICE."

Alice finished the letter at last, written while so many conflicting emotions were vibrating upon her heart-strings. She had addressed the daintily perfumed envelope and directed her maid to post it. The letter was unsatisfactory. She had been on the point of tearing it up several times and inditing another, but her ideas were confused and distracted. She watched it carried to the letter-box with wretched misgivings. As the door closed upon the servant's return, Alice, dressed in a light walking habit, entered the street. The residences of her father and of St. Clair were not distant, and she preferred to walk. Reaching her destination, the servant bore her card to Mrs. St. Clair, who did not seem the least bit surprised.

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She knew Alice Eldridge better than Alice Eldridge knew herself.

Mr. St. Clair had informed his wife of the proceedings of the previous day, and, while the woman was a trifle too venal to consider the fate of the deeds without some mental reservation of an equivocal character, she outwardly approved of her husband's action. "It was the only thing you could do," she had told her husband, kissing him. That settled the matter with Mr. St. Clair. The coincidence of his wife's opinion was of first consequence in the estimation of this reverend gentleman.

"I could not go away without seeing you," said Alice contritely, with a suspicion of tears in her voice.

"And I am glad you could not do so," said Mrs. St. Clair, throwing a white, plump arm around Alice's waist and kissing her affectionately.

The faces of both ladies cleared at the reconciliation. They were happy again in each other's possession. Both women were sedulously careful to avoid any reference to the cause of their recent misunderstanding.

"I have heard very flattering reports of you the last few days," said Mrs. St. Clair casually, "and was anxious to offer congratulations."

"Indeed! Pray proceed with particulars," said Alice.

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"Well, in the first place," continued Mrs. St. Clair, "Mrs. Jerome stated you were the most beautiful and the best gowned lady at the Governor's reception."

"How nice of her! I'll remember Mrs. Jerome with a present—a real exotic gem—upon my return."

"Secondly, that a galaxy of admirers were constantly in attendance at your side, 'conspicuously so,' as Mrs. Jerome stated."

"Mrs. Jerome doesn't know what nice things are in store for her," interjected Alice.

"Thirdly, that a certain Duke is infatuated with somebody's charms, and——"

"Dear me! Did you ask Mrs. Jerome if, in bestowing a compliment upon one, it becomes necessary to scandalize another?"

"Fourthly——"

"I protest. Mrs. Jerome is a gossip. When did the lady furnish this summary?"

"Yesterday."

"I thought so."

"Why 'thought so'?"

"Because my ears tingled furiously all yesterday," laughed Alice.

But, despite the frequent interruptions, Mrs. St. Clair succeeded in unfolding to her friend all the favorable rumors that had floated to her willing ears by Mesdames Grundy. Every lady,

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however proper and precise, be she as wise and logical as Portia and as good as a Madonna, listens with pleasure to a recital of her own excellence.

After tea, Alice exacted a promise from Mrs. St. Clair that the latter would visit her on the morrow, and took her departure, feeling more free and lighter of heart than she had felt since their estrangement.

The next day, Alice procured two golden lockets, and taking them to an artist, had the children's pictures placed in them. These she gave to the little people, who exchanged the souvenirs, proud of the ornaments, with the mutual promise always to keep and to wear them. Oh! the sweet sincerity of childhood! How often the simple constancy with which those days are linked together stand like silent groups of memory among the ruins of broken vows and blighted faith of after years!

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Richards, with his wife and daughter, the two children and Lord Howe leaned against the deck-rail of a Trans-Atlantic steamer, making a pretty picture as they watched the bustle and excitement of departure.

In a few moments the hoarse whistle will scream out its signal to weigh anchor. Already there is a lull in the tread of passengers across the gang plank. Hundreds of people are gathered upon the docks eagerly watching the faces of friends, smiling back from the deck of the *Mistress of the Deep*. Many eyes are red with weeping. There is something inexpressibly sad in the lifting of a gang plank. Until then some faltering loved one may hesitate and turn back; afterwards retreat is cut off. There is always a hush as the ocean liner veers away—a holding of the breath, a blanching of the cheek. To some, at least, that exchange of glances is the last. The limits of eternity are defined in the steady, unflinching gaze. Tears may follow later; an hour hence convulsions may shake the bosom, but now the pupils of those dry eyes are dilated twice their natural size, and stare dimly back into other eyes, out

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of which hope, in turn, has fled. Where the separation is of short duration, grief is demonstrative; where the parting is a final, a last farewell, there is no outward sign. This is the tragic side; there is also, as well, a comic side.

At the last moment, for instance, a commotion is observed. The functionaries who look after baggage are moving with unusual celerity, while a gentleman of some thirty years is noticed approaching the gangway. He wears a suit of light tweed, fitting his person in the most approved fashion. His derby is drawn down well fore and aft, which of itself announces the newcomer's nationality. But, if anything were wanting to complete the evidence, the eyeglass and walking-stick supply the deficit. He is English.

"Is that the Duke of Berwick?" gasped his lordship, pointing in the direction of the late acquisition.

"The resemblance is noticeable," remarked Mrs. Richards dryly.

"Guess it is," said the banker irritably; "it is either he or his double." The Duke was not one of his favorites.

"Really, it is an unexpected pleasure," said Alice sweetly. "How nice it will be to have two titled gentlemen in our party!"

"The last, but not least," said Lord Howe, exchanging a swift glance with Alice.

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"Who in thunderation knew he was coming?" demanded the banker vindictively.

"Going, you mean, papa dear," chimed in Alice, correcting her father's diction.

"Well, 'going,' then," growled the banker fiercely, "the impecunious puppy!"

"Papa, don't lose your temper, please. You will offend Lord Howe in referring to his countryman disrespectfully."

"Very considerate of my feelings," acknowledged the nobleman graciously. "By the way," he continued, "Mrs. Eldridge seems less surprised than the rest of us. She must have been partly prepared for the apparition."

"The noble-minded are never suspicious," retorted Alice. "No, I was not fortified. Forewarned does not mean forearmed as applying to the English nobility."

"No one would have credited my daughter with such secretiveness," ventured Mr. Richards.

"Nor that anything, stinging like a bee, makes honey," dropped in the nobleman acrimoniously.

"There are insects, not making sweets, that sting," volunteered Alice, waving a handkerchief to draw the Duke's attention.

"What are you up to? Inciting an insurrection?" asked the banker.

"A mutiny?" demanded the nobleman.

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"Flying the colors of truce," replied Alice serenely.

The subject of the preceding dialogue saw the waving signal and came forward radiantly, beaming blandly upon Mrs. Eldridge.

"How kind to take such pains to bid us good-bye," purred Alice, extending her hand.

The Duke squeezed the tips of her fingers in a transport of delight.

"By Jove!" muttered the old nobleman, wedging his way forward, "maybe that's it."

"*Au revoir*," said Alice.

"Farewell," said Lord Howe.

"Good-bye," exclaimed Mrs. Richards.

"You'll have to hurry," said the banker.

Such an effusion of energy could only be prompted by most friendly considerations, and the Duke hastened to set his zealous acquaintances at ease.

"I am a passenger, my friends, don't you know, as yourselves."

"Oh!" }
"Ah!" } spontaneously.
"Oh!" }

"Really and truly!" cried Alice, mixing the bitter herbs together deliciously. "How happy you make us!"

"Us?" cried the nobleman.

"Us?" repeated the banker.

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Alice should have greatly preferred that the duke prolong his visit of conquest in America. She felt some qualms of conscience. Perhaps, in her whim of vexing the old nobleman, or, more correctly speaking, in her efforts to conceal a secret from him, she had given the least bit of encouragement to the late passenger. This introspection gave her no great uneasiness, however, except in that it may have been responsible for the present annoying incumbrance. The duke was more "A thing of beauty, than a joy forever." He was not bad looking, possessed faultless manners—courtliness—and rather a fine figure. In short, he was decidedly attractive in those outward appearances or embellishments so charming to the fair sex. But it was veneer, largely due, it is true, to those misfortunes which beset the feet of English aristocracy. A young peer of England must needs be well balanced or he is invariably sure of toppling over into the maelstrom of pleasure. The Duke of Berwick was not essentially well balanced, and had plunged headlong into the vortex. He lavished money right and left. A score of satellites constantly gyrated about him, existing upon his bounty; creatures who encouraged him in his extravagance as it correspondingly increased their opportunities. Five years of this indulgence and the duke suddenly awoke to a realization that his patrimony

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had been swept away. When a man has been traveling at break-neck gait it is no ordinary obstruction that stops his career. He may be slackened in speed by the collision, he may be *slowed* up some, but there is no such thing as a "stand-still." A thorough racer does not quit the track at the first defeat. "Outclassed" is the hardest word in the vocabulary for a man to apply to himself. As the Duke of Berwick had lived luxuriously upon his principal, he now lived luxuriously upon his credit. Obtaining unlimited credit is merely a matter or affair of living sumptuously. Of course, a day of reckoning is bound to come sooner or later. Postponement is not difficult until after the creditor's suspicions are aroused of the inability to pay, then he becomes imperious. The artisan who charges us four prices for his ware is gracious to obsequiousness as long as he is secure. But the instant his security is reduced he is twenty times meaner and more obstreperous in obtaining payment than the creditor who made, or rather was to have made, a decent or fair profit. The duke's creditors, and especially the first-mentioned class, became so provokingly ill-mannered as to demand satisfaction instead of promises; and intimated that, unless liquidation was forthcoming immediately, the Duke should be accommodated with apartments in the vicinity of the Tower. The duke's intentions

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to pay were greatly superior to his ability to discharge. A rumor or two of his financial embarrassment, after once being started, circulated freely, making it extremely mortifying for the fallen nobleman to solicit temporary assistance from any of his "well-able-to-loan" associates, especially so, having been shaken an indefinite number of times already by companions, who had assisted him freely, at an earlier day, in spending his substance.

The duke did not advertise his departure to America in advance. It was disagreeable business enough at best; but, like a sensible fellow, whose wits had been partly recovered by reverses, he kept his own counsel, taking his leave abroad so privately that none of his creditors was the wiser until his being a fugitive became a matter of publicity.

The duke was more than half smitten with Alice, aside from pecuniary considerations, for which he claimed great credit, as the latter of themselves are known before now to have been the sole equivalent of many matrimonial alliances. He was a man of magnificent nerve. Upon occasions too numerous to mention he had banked heavily upon this capital without risk of having his paper dishonored. Nerve is a collateral upon which many a loan has been advanced. It is the only stock in trade of many people one knows.

The monosyllable "us" had been emphasized

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with so much energy as to disabuse his understanding of any false estimation he may have previously enjoyed of his status in the opinions of the two gentlemen. His abasement was of but momentary duration.

"I am assured of a pleasant voyage by the warmth of your gracious reception," he said, looking the two men steadily in the eyes as he spoke. "The time may come when it shall be my happiness to return the compliment."

Alice gave him an admiring glance, which sufficiently compensated for any and all unexpected antipathy from the two bellicose old gentlemen. Further rupture was averted by a shiver which seemed to vibrate every steel rib and timber of the monstrous steamer. The first revolution of the iron propeller had cleaved the water on a voyage of three thousand miles.

During the commotion the duke had the good manners to withdraw from his painful position unobserved, retreating to his cabin, where he communed with himself something after the following order:

"Mrs. Eldridge is beautiful and rich. Her radiant beauty should make me envied; her riches should pay my debts; on the whole I'd be a lucky dog. She has the form of a Lucretia Borgia, and the face of a Madonna. Wedlock with such perfection is 'a consummation devoutly to be wished.'"

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I should be under perpetual obligations to her. I might love her. She would deserve my adoration. I have two weeks to pay court to her—no rivals. I must succeed; 'cause why?—well, I must win, that's all. I fled from the embrace of my creditors—twenty thousand pounds! Zounds! Now I fly back to their arms, reserving at all times the privilege of jumping overboard. It is preposterous.

“My uncle, the old curmudgeon, is so unobliging as to live. Really, he has forfeited all claims to my regard. He is eighty-two in July. The last ten birthdays were great reliefs to me; too bad they are three hundred and sixty-five days apart. He is a hale and hearty old man, and bids fair to reach the century mark. I'm sadly in disgrace with the old—my venerable uncle. He would not advance me one hundred pounds to save my neck. I can't afford to wait, even if I do get it all in the end. I will not tolerate banishment. America! 'Angels and ministers of grace defend us.' Anything but America! The aborigines of Cabot's time are preferable to its present inhabitants. I am no dweller with the Yankee. I should as soon fraternize with a Hungarian. A wife is the sole remaining alternative. I never believed that I should be reduced to such extremity. Then I'll brace up, reform, enter politics, and be somebody.

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"I honestly believe I love the woman, anyway. Her father—fudge! I can circumvent him. Lord Howe has had too gentle nurture to tattle. He'll give me a piece of his mind free gratis, but he'll not meddle with my affairs. Mrs. Eldridge has some grudge against him; I wonder what it is? For the next two weeks I am between a wife and Newgate prison. Was ever a mortal so uncomfortably situated? I am perspiring. My reflections are hotter than tophet. One is a complete checkmate to the other. There is this difference, however: if I win a wife, I escape Newgate; if I win Newgate, the wife escapes me. It is well to keep details in mind. This is what comes of a man living a Bohemian life. He becomes deplorably compromised. Marriage is an institution for which I have little relish. My uncle! How I should bless his memory at his crisis!"

These gloomy meditations were interrupted by the gong sounding its summons to the mid-day meal. The duke was too intent on the business in hand to waste valuable time in profitless speculations. His valet dressed him with the utmost regard to detail. Among the limited virtues in the possession of the duke that of scrupulous neatness was conspicuous. This of itself is ample to cover a multitude of sins. The duke never dressed elaborately—showily. If he attracted notice it was because of a punctilious observance of the utmost

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simplicity combined with artistic effect, a union that produces an agreeable impression without offending any rule of propriety. He simply harmonized. Some men are born imbued with the attribute of tidiness; some are born slovenly, live that way and die the same. Tidiness and tawdriness are distinct. The former is a great blessing, though often made a subject of disparagement. There is a difference between this quality and primping. May the good angels deliver us from the nincompoop that primps! He is an irritant that aggravates every malady of which flesh is heir. On the contrary, the mere presence of men of the duke's measure concerning matters of attire, acts as a sedative to the entire nervous system. Negligence in the matter of dress is a sin of both commission and omission. One knows many people whose intellectual endowments especially fit them to be leaders of society, but who, by their general indifference to personal appearance, are excluded from the sphere they are intended so eminently to adorn. Should we not prefer seeing Diogenes among the brightest constellation of Athenian society than inhabiting his celebrated tub?

The duke was good for *two weeks*; but that was about his limit. He could amuse for a fortnight; in a month he was a bore, two months an incubus. Still, he differentiated from the class of nuisances

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of which he formed a part—he knew it, thereby deserving the credit of sagacity. He visited people for whom he entertained regard at long intervals, thus maintaining a respectable reputation for cleverness.

He was fortunate in arriving at the opportune moment to assist Mrs. Eldridge to the dining-room.

After refreshments, while leisurely passing Lord Howe and the banker with the ladies, he overheard the former exchanging maledictions over the villainous cigars with which the salon was stocked. He proceeded to his quarters and brought the gentlemen a box, which he ventured to remark would prove to their liking. This delicate consideration, under all circumstances, merited a kinder fate than reserved for the occasion. Neither of the gentlemen recovered from surprise in time to decline the favor before the unruffled duke retired and rejoined the ladies, leaving the two men vigorously puffing away at the foul purchases of the steamer's sample-room, now and then gazing at the box dubiously.

"I recommend a voyage to all persons making New Year's resolutions of swearing off the tobacco habit," said the banker, tossing the half-consumed cigar into the cuspidor.

"I'd like to be a judge long enough to pass sentence upon the manufacturer of that cabbage

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blossom," said the nobleman, imitating the action of his companion. "These cigars are infamous, atrocious."

They were inveterate smokers. They sat a long while glowering upon the inviting cover seductively placed before them.

"He's a deep one, eh?" admitted the banker after a prolonged silence.

"A—a Pitt," responded the Englishman.

"If we accept, he'll levy tribute at pleasure," allowed the financier thoughtfully.

"I decline to be obligated," said the nobleman resolutely, rising and walking a few steps away.

"Here, too," added the banker, stationing himself resolutely by the side of his associate.

For ten minutes they surveyed the shimmering surface of the ocean complacently.

"Wonder what brand they are?" speculated the banker.

"Haven't an idea," acknowledged the Englishman. Then, after a painful silence, he continued, visibly relenting:

"Let's go see."

"Be careful, they are watching us," said the Philadelphian, noticing the exultant pleasure in his daughter's face at the turning of the tables.

"Let's light one and pronounce it more abominable than the salon commodity," suggested the Englishman.

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“Agreed—‘commodity’ is good.”

They returned to the stand, Lord Howe picking up the box.

“‘Keith’s Pride!’” he exclaimed; “he has winged us.”

“Best cigar on the market,” declared the banker in despair. “What are we to do?”

“Smoke,” replied the Englishman.

“How about obligations?”

“We have to do one of two things.”

“What’s in your mind?” asked the banker, reckless of consequences.

“Paying his debts or presenting him a cigar factory upon our arrival.”

“What is the extent of his liabilities?”

“Twenty thousand pounds.”

“Expensive! But I believe we shall enjoy a cigar at that price.”

“So do I.”

The cover was demolished and they proceeded to burn two cigars apiece uninterrupted by further conversation.

“How do you find them?” asked the duke, approaching from the rear with the ladies.

“Delicious,” acknowledged the banker.

“A relaxation,” said the nobleman.

“What confirmed and contented victims of the nicotine habit,” ventured Alice facetiously, rubbing her hand caressingly over her father’s head.

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"I have thanked the duke, papa, for both of you," she finished sweetly.

"If filial devotion is rewarded in heaven," commented the Englishman, "you'll be envied of the angels."

"It is too bad I shall not be able to use your testimonials," she retorted irreverently.

"Communication is shut off," dabbed in the duke.

After this episode the ordinary civilities were observed between the three gentlemen.

The duke was perplexed and mystified as to Alice's regards toward him. Despite his unmistakable preference for her society, she treated him with the utmost *sang-froid*. Upon two or three occasions already she had dexterously rescued him on the verge of a declaration. The consummate skill with which she had baffled him had the effect of increasing his admiration as well as his apprehensions. In sheer desperation, he resolved that he would know his fate, however, at the first opportunity that presented itself.

In two more days they would be in sight of his native land. His waking and sleeping hours were filled with visions of creditors, magistrates, and bailiffs. Freedom never seemed so precious, nor so elusive, as it had during the hours of this voyage. That same evening the much-coveted chance unexpectedly arrived.

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They were alone. It was twilight. The hour, the glorious evening, the smooth surface of the phosphorescent water, the slight careening of the steamer as it plunged through the waves, were confederates, as the duke imagined, to aid him in the amatorian effort of his life.

"The captain says we shall see land day after to-morrow," said Alice.

"Shall you be so happy in renouncing the water?" asked the duke, with a quaver in his voice not entirely simulated.

"Why, of course," she replied, preferring not to notice his agitation.

"And I," he said histrionically, "dread the sight of land. It separates me from the one woman I love. Mrs. Eldridge—Alice—I love you. Will you be my wife? My future happiness depends upon your answer." He was terribly in earnest. Alice remained silent some moments, while he stood before her with arms crossed upon his breast, watching her intently. "Do not answer now—wait—to-morrow—a week hence. Only lighten my despair with a ray of hope."

However unworthy the motives governing his action at the outset in reference to Alice Eldridge, as he stood before her, pleading for her affection, he loved her as he had never loved and never should love another woman.

"No, Duke of Berwick, this must be the last in-

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interview between us when this subject is mentioned. I can never be your wife." She paused again, so long that the silence became cruel. "I was thinking," she said finally, "whether or no it were best to be perfectly frank with you."

"Proceed," he said; "I am listening." He had not moved so much as a muscle since she began speaking. The full force of his loss seemed to stun and stupefy him.

"I admire certain traits of your character, but I could never love you. I know your circumstances; you are in debt. My fortune would relieve your pressing obligations——"

"Has Lord Howe dared——" commenced the duke.

"Lord Howe has never discussed your affairs," she interrupted.

"Is my love, then, a subject of insult?" he asked, his face darkening.

"Wait! I am rich. You will admit you are involved hopelessly in debt. You braved your creditors and ventured upon a return to your native land in hopes of winning my fortune." She hesitated again.

"You have dismissed me," he stammered, "but I wish you to finish—you have my attention."

"I saw this the day we sailed from New York," she continued without noticing his interruption.

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“I resolved, then and there, to help you. I had compromised myself. I had shown you some preference. I am aware that you fall into a valuable estate upon the death of your uncle. I wish you to accept a loan of thirty thousand pounds, payable six months after your relative’s death. Upon the whole you are an honorable man. You will repay the principal and interest. You can laugh your creditors in the face. You will neither return to the old associates, nor to the old habits of life. You will always be my friend. Your proper position in the world is one of honor and prominence; and I exact a promise from you that you will attain both.”

“Mrs. Eldridge, you make me feel insignificant. What you have said—your accusations—are in part true. Let me believe, at least, that my manhood has suffered by reputation. I trust you do not consider me capable of accepting the proposition of a loan from a woman rejecting my love with insult. I shall cherish your advice, you may depend. Farewell.”

“Duke,” but he had moved swiftly beyond the sound of her voice.

“He is not such a bad sort after all,” she said aloud.

“I am beginning to think so myself,” said a voice at her elbow.

“Lord Howe!” she exclaimed indignantly.

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"At your service, madam," he replied, with a Chesterfieldian courtesy.

"Did you overhear the conversation between the duke and myself?" she demanded, exasperated almost beyond self-control.

"If people wish to discuss love affairs in public places and in the presence of old men, it would be preposterous to frustrate such delightful occupation," he ventured indolently, without pretending to propitiate her displeasure.

"I shall forgive you upon one condition."

"Please don't—that is, don't do anything rash that you may repent," he drawled. "I merely disturbed you to say that I have decided to satisfy our mutual friend, the duke's, debts myself, and you need have no farther uneasiness on that account. You see, your father and I owe him a debt of gratitude—that box of cigars. I believe you have aroused the poor cuss, however, for which please accept my thanks." He was bowing himself away, when recalled peremptorily.

"Lord Howe!"

"Your slightest wish is a command, madam."

"I am going to ask the last and only favor of you I shall ever request."

"It is the first as well as the last," corrected the nobleman. "I trust I can oblige you."

"Well, 'first and last,' as you will. Remain here; I shall return directly." He bowed assent

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and she left him quickly. She was absent probably five minutes, when he heard her footstep approaching. He continued to gaze at the ocean.

"I have fifty numbers of the Philadelphia *North American*, containing the account of my daughter's adventure. Take the entire lot and give me the clipping from your pocket." She held the papers toward him.

"Oh, haven't you forgotten that circumstance? What a retentive memory you possess!" He gave her a searching look, seized one of the papers, spread it open and—sure enough, there was the article, word for word.

"It is singular; I went to the office of the *North American* the day I reached Philadelphia and asked for a copy of the paper containing the account, for fear of losing the paragraph entrusted to me by Edward Reynolds; and it was reported to me that the last one had been sold. Some speech, as I remember, caused the extras to go like wildfire. I offered them five dollars for a single number. A thorough search was made, but not a copy was to be found on the premises. And you say you have fifty?"

"Yes, my lord; are the odds sufficient?"

He made a motion towards his pocket; the woman was breathing heavily. Some recollection arrested his arm. Alice stepped forward, her radiant face upturned and beaming.

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"It is good of you—so kind and noble. I shall love you dearly," her warm breath swept over his temples. "Let me assist, my lord." She touched his stationary arm. "Fifty to one," she repeated feverishly. She did not tell him that the entire paper had been reset and printed at an enormous cost to get that fifty edition.

"I must not." If he had dealt her a blow she would not have recoiled more. Then she crept to his side again.

"Lord Howe," she pleaded, "you honor and respect my father and mother. Give their only child the thing she begs of you. She would ask it on her knees, if need be."

"Upon one condition," he replied inexorably.

She caught at the hope held out by his words as a drowning man clutches at some solitary splinter slivered in shipwreck floating upon the waves.

"I grant it—I grant it—if a wom——"

"It is this: that you promise to love him—Edward Reynolds." His voice was hoarse and thick. She sprang backward and stood confronting him, white and livid as a corpse, her eyes burning him with their brilliancy. Then she picked up the papers and, walking to the rail, cast them overboard. Without noticing her companion, she glided from his presence.

"I love her more than I hate her, in spite of

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myself, and—and—Reynolds. She is a conundrum, a riddle, a—well, she won't marry the duke, at any rate."

The next day Lord Howe informed the Duke of Berwick that the former would arrange a compromise with all creditors, that upon that score the latter might be at rest. In addition, the old nobleman promised to make an advance for him to live upon until the duke's admission to his estate. The duke was grateful.

That same evening the Duke of Berwick was preparing to leave the steamer. It had swung into position at the pier. He expected a reception by creditors and bailiffs galore. In this he was disappointed. Instead, lined up in respectful defile, was the whole set of former sycophants in force. They were smiling and bowing and scraping; one slightly removed to the rear, in his attachment and devotion blew a kiss at the returning prodigal, pressing the tips of his fingers to his heart after the sickening blandishment. What did this demonstration, or rather this want of demonstration, mean? There were neither creditors, bailiffs nor constables in sight.

"Your lamented uncle is dead," chirped a chorus of voices.

"And buried, too," supplemented another.

"Oh!" The duke comprehended. The man lately bereaved by the loss of an uncle faced

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squarely about and retreated to the deck of the steamer, met Mrs. Eldridge and motioned her aside.

"Madam," he said, "my uncle is dead. I am one of the richest men in England. Instead of a penniless, debt-ridden man, the Duke of Berwick now asks—nay begs you to become his wife, because he sincerely loves you."

"Stop, please; it can never be. You are acting honorably. I respect you; but my decision is irrevocable. Your honorable conduct is a refutation of my suspicions. Duke of Berwick, as a proof of my confidence and esteem, I tell you this: My heart is not mine to give. I know you will be an honor to your name and title, and as we part," holding out her hand, "let me ask for your friendship."

"I shall be—all you ask. Farewell," raising her hand to his lips.

"Farewell," said Alice sadly.

"So your heart is not yours to give," repeated Lord Howe. "I hope you will be fortunate in all those tender affairs of the——" he touched the region of his vest-buttons on the left side, making a profound courtesy.

"It is no matter," said the woman, looking the intruder squarely in the eyes.

"What is 'no matter'?" asked his lordship.

"Nothing," she replied. "I had thought Lord

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Howe too much of an English gentleman to condescend to such rudeness.”

Lord Howe no sooner made the remark than he felt ashamed of his conduct. He had persuaded himself that Edward and Alice would yet meet at the altar. He had schemed and planned how it might be brought about. He was going to be instrumental in bringing around this result, and, as he was passing but a moment since and overheard the admission from her lips, it condemned the hopes he had been building upon. He felt a sense of injury and disappointment that found expression in his uncivil language. Alice Eldridge, he believed, had decoyed her regal beauty to ensnare the affections of one whom his lordship greatly esteemed. It had blighted the life of the victim. In his noble mind he accused her of coquetry, of employing her divine beauty—the gifts of her matchless mind, to blast and destroy the future happiness of a man whose every thought was pure and good—whose veneration for woman was Christ-like. If he had had it in his power, as they stood confronting each other, he would have inflicted upon her in return a suffering as great in its sorrow as the one she had ruthlessly caused Edward Reynolds.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Jacob Ikestine and his brother Solomon, proprietors of a well-patronized art gallery of London, are closeted together in their private office. The younger brother had been invited summarily to the interview.

"Ve be equal bardners, be ve not?" inquired Jacob of his younger brother dictatorily.

"Fader of Abraham! So ve be, und splendid brofets, mine broder—und splendid brofets!" assented the junior member of the firm, who saw a philippic about to be delivered, and wished to avert the impending storm by allusion to unprecedented prosperity.

"You sleep away your life." Solomon's hands were lifted in remonstrance. "You sleep," continued Jacob, unaffected by the touching physical and mental prostration of his kinsman, "vhile I bring the ewers of vater und the tables of stone." Here the speaker focussed his flashing eyes fully upon the culprit's face, and continued in a voice more severe even than previously used, "Vhat is that Gentile artist doing, und how stands the rent?"

Solomon turned with alacrity to the ledger,

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while the speaker refrained from interruption during the investigation.

“‘Hope,’ vive bounds on rent—sold for vifty bounds—rent paid to April 1, 1860,” Solomon read from the tomes. It was desired by this enterprising firm of Israelites to secure such tenants for the various properties under the firm ownership who exchanged their products, be it of whatever character, for rent, for which trifling sums were allowed the tenants and exorbitant prices charged the public.

“Two months overdue,” commented the object of the elder brother’s displeasure, having computed by mental process the time for which the tenant was in default.

“Two months overdue! Mine God of Israel! Two months overdue! Our house shall fail.” Jacob wrung his hands in hopeless dejection.

“I will go to the delinquent—the rascally bankrupt. Abraham forgive me.” In his impetuosity he had nearly eluded his elder relative.

“Nein! Nein!” exclaimed Jacob. “God of Israel, stop the ravisher of thy chosen people.” Solomon came to an abrupt and precipitous halt. “He paints sublime! Sublime! The genius of Michael Angelo dwells in the brush. God of Abraham! ve vill be rich as Isaac of York. Our children shall inherit; our grandchildren—Solomon, you sleep.”

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These pleasant reflections of present and prospective expectations for the generations of Ikestines, so far as Abraham's favors were supplicated and invoked, terminated in the perpetual reminder of his kinsman's business torpor or coma.

Solomon's face reflected, as a mirror, the anticipation of wealth as his brother proceeded, to be cast in deepest dejection upon reference to the proverbial sleepiness. Already in his mind he was meditating the usury he would extort from the offending artist for subjecting him to the just and well-merited rebuke of his kinsman for inattention to their mutual interests, and for want of the customary vigilance of their people.

"I vill die of mordification, but I vill make him pay—the wagrant," declared Solomon, preparing to depart.

"He paints." Jacob spoke slowly, suggestively.

Here a new intelligence began to shine in Solomon's cunning eyes.

"I vill go, look, see."

"Be circumspect. Father of Abraham! Curse not thy chosen people."

Thirty minutes later a gentle rap was tattooed upon a door leading into the rear part of a third-story building, where indigent artists and poor tenants found it easy to make arrangement for quarterly rents. The room the Jew was about to enter was used by Michael Lieb as an atelier.

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“Ah, it is you! Good afternoon, Mr. Ikestine,” said the painter, welcoming his visitor.

But Ikestine’s eyes had been arrested, as were all his faculties, upon the canvas, some six feet by eight, before him. He had not heard the salutation. This Jew was one of the best critics and connoisseurs of art in London. He was amazed at the scope of imagination and at the artist’s skill. It was as though he heard his brother’s favorite expression, “Solomon, you sleeb,” that he returned to the habitual cringing, money-making habit of his race.

“Ah, I vas glad to zee you in such delightvul, and, I may hope, provitable occupation.”

A little color rushed to the pale cheeks of the artist. He saw the Jew was surprised. He fancied he had detected in the face of the Israelite an admission of power in the canvas, and an ambition thirsting for recognition and fame was gratified in the momentary surrender of the Jew’s aggressive and ever alert instinct of gain.

“My broder and I wisit our tenants. Ve vorbear!” Here the speaker’s eyes irresistibly returned to the canvas. “Ve vorbear!”

“I hope I shall not require your indulgence beyond a couple of weeks,” said the artist.

“The auction sales are next veek and veek after,” muttered the Jew. “But why oxpose your vorks to the vulgar? Vait till fame comes

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to you! Ve vill aid, ve vill find you batrons. When baintings sell at these zales, and the brice is low, the artist zeldom escapes the injury done his reputation. Ve vill throw the prestige of our name about the hand that colored the conception of a great thought into the reality of berfection. Ve zold that landscape 'Hope' for vive bounds"—without a sign of hesitation at the deception (he had received fifty pounds for the painting)—“and this—Fader of Abraham!” turning once more to the canvas, “is even better and a greater picture than that.”

“I thank you for your favorable opinion of its merits.”

“My broder and I, ve encourage our tenants. Ve give you ten bounds for this; ve don't mind ve be sheated. Ve encourage our tenants. Fader of Abraham! Ten bounds! I have said it.”

“Not this afternoon; it is not finished.”

“Ten bounds and a quarter rent,” the Jew came at him again.

“Not to-day, Mr. Ikestine.”

“I vill call to-morrow wid a receipt. Money is close, bisiness is dull. Mine God! Dose auction sales vill ruin the firm of Ikestine.” The Jew shot a lingering glance at the canvas, bowed and withdrew.

As he quitted the room the artist leaned against a wooden shelf. The words of his recent visitor

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sunk deep. "I had thought to receive a hundred pounds for this. I need so many things. My clothes are threadbare; I am destitute. No money, perhaps, no friends. 'Ten pounds and a quarter's rent.' Well, maybe it is all it's worth." He raised a paper beneath which he had concealed a meager lunch, picked up a biscuit and began to partake of the meal interrupted by the advent of the Jew, mastication being aided by an occasional swallow of water from an earthen vessel standing upon the table. After these frugal refreshments, the young artist made preparations to resume work, when a voice accosted him.

"Hard at it, as usual, eh?"

"You—you here, Mr. Reynolds!"

"Why, of course, my young friend. You don't suppose I am utterly indifferent to your existence, I trust. I come to ask a great favor."

"I shall only be too happy to oblige, if it lies in my power."

"Well, come and dine with me this evening; I have a friend I want to introduce," said Reynolds.

"I must—I am compelled—do not think me ungrateful; but I am forced to decline your kind invitation. I shall be none the less happy, however, in affording you any service lying in my power." The best garments owned by this young artist were long since threadbare, and shone like the sides of a glass bottle.

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"Oh, pshaw! You must come. Say, can you give me a sitting in a few weeks?"

"Yes, any time."

"This is a business transaction."

"Why, of course."

"Oh, by the way, next week is sales week, I believe."

"Yes."

"When do you get 'Renaissance' in the gallery?"

"Possibly not until the latter part of the week."

"Sometimes I do things without considering consequences. I have one in mind now. I am going to ask you, however, beforehand not to think me officious or impertinent."

"I am sure I could not think of you as either; yet all London says you are a strange man, a powerful man, a great man."

"Have a care, sir, you will make me vain. Pay this back to me after next week. Hush! I would not cause you humiliation for principalities. I know you are in need of it, and what's the use of having friends if we don't use them? Be sure and come at seven o'clock sharp. As my friendship has been of some service to you in the past, I shall demand your friendship when you become famous, a sort of reciprocity, as it were." Without waiting for the surprised artist to reply, the visitor departed.

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Lieb, at first blush, was inclined to be indignant; but that impulse passed away, and he secretly blessed the friend advancing the loan of which he stood in such sore need.

There were five ten-pound Bank of England notes lying upon the table. As yet he had not touched the new, crisp bills. "I ought not, should not accept this favor; and still, it would offend him, and he has shown me so many proofs of his kindness; besides, I have a dozen uses for money," approaching nearer the table. "My painting will bring twenty pounds at least. Week after next I can return it. The Jew will be after his rent to-morrow; and if I go to Reynolds this evening I must have a pair of shoes and a necktie. My wardrobe belongs to the Adam and Eve period. I wonder who it is will be present at Reynolds' to-night?" He folded the five notes and stored them away carefully in his pocket.

That evening the young artist was admitted to the unpretentious suite of rooms occupied by Edward Reynolds.

"I should have been greatly disappointed had you not come," said the host, rising and extending his hand cordially.

"I owe you such a debt of gratitude," asserted the artist, "that your wishes are my commands."

"I fail to see where the gratitude comes in; if anything, I am your debtor. You have been a

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source of pleasure to me these many years as I have watched you progressing so rapidly in your accepted calling. This has been a diversion, occupying my mind, but for which, along with various other duties, I should have fallen a victim of depression. It has been, by no means, one-sided; so there now, ease your mind on that score."

"Mr. Reynolds, I should have despaired so many times during the past years, except for your sympathy and encouragement. I learned to look forward to your visits with eager anticipation; I labored to win your approbation. Many, many times, when I have felt like turning back and fleeing from the narrow and perilous paths leading to those inaccessible heights so few attain, to rest in the cool of sylvan shade, and to bathe my dust-stained limbs in crystal streams whose murmurs are always heard but never seen by the few solitary wayfarers seeking fame, I have been held in the rugged course by the thought: 'What would Reynolds say?' There have been moments when, even against my better judgment, I have fancied you an implacable enemy, binding me closer to a destiny from which I could not, yet felt I must, escape. I clung to the brush unconsciously because you willed me to the canvas without the exercise of volition on my part; and yet—and yet—Mr. Reynolds," continued the artist, looking away from the face of his friend, "I am completely

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fagged and jaded. I never felt so weak as at the present moment. The future is so uncertain. I have exhausted my substance, and as the purse has become lighter confidence has proportionately disappeared. Fame is illusory; it mocks and maddens and beckons onward; it laughs cruelly, pitilessly at the expiring victims perishing in its pursuit, while, with fingers cold as Iceland snow, it fits laurel wreathes of immortality to the lone survivor's brow. Oh, the ego," exclaimed the speaker passionately, "so strong in every man that makes sacrifice for excellence, becomes impatient and accuses the world of stupidity and inappreciation!"

"Ah! never get morbid. Go plunge and drown in that 'Crystal Stream' if you wish, but don't get morbid. Perhaps I can see in your complaint a tinge of envy. Merit is a meed, my young friend, claimed by every man according to his just deserts. The world may be slow to accept and recognize the true and intrinsic value of many labors; but, sooner or later, the latch-string is lifted and the tardy guest for whom so many wait is sure to enter. You will learn to despise the causes that now incite to crowning efforts. That time will come when you shall look back upon this experience as the crucial test that an all-wise Providence saw fit to impose in your behalf. If I have found you disheartened—sometimes on the point

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of vacillating—and have stimulated the flagging courage to tasks, it was because I knew triumph awaited you. My young friend, you have genius, and the God that gave you that genius exacts a service in the interests of mankind. He makes you an instrument—a means to an end. Art to-day is mediocre. Painters are using oils and pigments in the representation of characters and objects already stamped with the shadows of approaching night. To-morrow conditions change, and the artist so popular to-day is unprepared for the change of public opinion, and is fated to look upon his labor as little better than wasted. The scenes of life are ever shifting and the dawn of a new era is peeping from behind colossal blunders of the past and present. The number is limited that shall survive the heat and glare of the coming day. Nature is the dame that gives birth to undying events. Among the records which alone are the handiwork of God is found the abiding principles of truth. He that seeks here shall not seek in vain. When one builds elsewhere, however he builds and well, defects appear when exposed to the test of time and the inevitable penalty for violation of the law which none may disregard—oblivion—begins to date from the period of the transgression. What little things, insignificant in themselves, mar the works of beauty! Error is perpetuated as well as truth; but they never mix.

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‘ Each has her votaries; but the purpose each fulfills is as wide apart as the antipodes.”

“True, but the semblance between truth and error is so real, oft-times, that the detection of the deception is impossible,” said the artist.

“Not so. The similitude may be close, still the relation is never that intimate that discovery of the genuine is prevented. It is in this, as in all else, a person must perfect himself in order to guard against imposition. It does not avail a man that he is deceived by the guile and practices of another. What resistance was made? What precaution taken? What agencies employed? He that keeps his lamps burning brightly, by constant trimming and attention, is the one that entertains no forbidden guests. Fallacies are prevalent because they are popular; they are popular because they are pleasant; and they are pleasant because of the piquancy which attaches to them in the minds of the multitude, without reflecting sufficiently upon the quality of the pleasure, or the emotion produced by it. Growth and development are conditions that admit of no compromise with error, however firmly seated in public favor the latter may be. He, contented to sleep in the shallow affection of a thoughtless age, is the courtier basking in the smiles of an inconstant prince. Whatever man does is not lost, either for good or for evil. The age in which he lives may

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be unprepared to receive the truths which he scatters at its feet, but every advance step is noted and imperceptibly the imprint is stamped indelibly. The trouble is we expect to realize too soon. One rushes from the beaten path and, seeking the highest eminence, holds aloft the beacon blazing with the choicest fagots of the mind to wonder in amazement at the apathy of the world. Many become soured by what they choose to term neglect, and their usefulness is destroyed. Nothing seems realized from the investment of every faculty, where so much was anticipated. The great pity of it is that he who, like the priests of old, never suffered the fire to become extinguished upon the temple altars of Delphi and Vesta, by tireless vigils of guarding the sacred flame, falls at last exhausted, and is consumed by the conflagration of his own kindling. But the reflections of those charred embers have been photographed upon the ages to come, and are destined to illumine the pathway of future progress."

"But," asked the artist, "has a man a right to seek the isolation of which you speak? To practice self-abnegation to such extent? The social obligations of life are demands not to be easily cast aside. A man isolating himself from his fellows, although he may solve a portion of the problems of true economics, loses the valued privileges himself, and fails in existence. Whoever sur-

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renders his life absolutely and toils ceaselessly for the advancement of his fellowmen suffers, as it seems to me, the throes of martyrdom."

"Yours is the doctrine of the school that holds, 'Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow ye may die.' No, my young friend, on the contrary, the true benefactor does not withdraw from his kind; rather he mingles with men. It is only by intimacy and a knowledge of human nature that he comes to know the requirements of his race, and in supplying the essential needs of the physical and mental man is unfolded the divine purpose of the life, which the Creator gives in trust to be used, not selfishly in obtaining private ends and the gratification of personal pleasures and pursuits, as so many mistake, but for the advancement, elevation and ennobling of the composite members of a great family."

"You are right, perhaps; yet, in the warmth of youth, it is cheerless to contemplate sitting by this frozen image of your description until the blood is congealed. The imagination of the artist relinquishes under protest the pleasures of youth to bathe in the icy fountains of your philosophy. You would have one give, not only a part, but all, to a mistress exacting but never giving in return. Mr. Reynolds, the ties of a happy home have been the dream of my life. To lay down the labors of the day, to find relaxation in the love of a true

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woman and the charm of a holy fireside, is a picture excelling human art, because God has painted it upon the soul of every man," said Lieb.

"Others have dreamed that dream. The white wings of love, my boy, are seen best in the morning of life. Why, there are millions of both men and women in this great world of ours from whose cheerless lives the happiness of home ties is forever lost. There is neither chart nor compass for them. What you say is true. God paints a picture upon the soul of every man and every woman. I have wondered if the colors of that picture are indelible? If they do not fade with years? If the hues never dim? If the canvas never rots? If the gorgeous prism never becomes obscure and subdued in the flashlights of the soul? Many of us are disposed to become pessimists in matters of the heart. We accept blindly the religion of love that teaches that some woman is created for every man, and, vice versa, some man for every woman. Each is incomplete without the other. If they never meet, there is rest and peace for neither. Man without a home, without a wife and children, is a stranger to earth's greatest joys. But the condition of this is that the woman must be the one, of all others, his counterpart. Either sex is happier single than mismated. Cherish this picture of yours as much as you wish. A cheerful fireside and the love of a good woman are not

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'obstacles in the way of any man's advancement. They are inspirations to the professions, to art, to science, and to every employment upon which hands toil and the brain labors. No life so humble, none so powerful and great, that the charm of love fails to brighten and glorify. Let me give you this bit of advice: if it shall ever be your lot to love some woman that cannot return your affection, never descend to the misogynist. Find some woman you can honor and respect, with similar tastes, good impulses, generous, frank, congenial, and entrust your future happiness to her keeping. Yes, sir, there is nothing in the world will help a man forget a woman as well as *woman*." The speaker felt what he was speaking.

The artist had all he could do to keep his face straight at this sage advice from one whose life was a refutation of the doctrine so eloquently advocated.

"Consistency," said Lieb, "is a jewel. It is a trifle singular that, entertaining such views upon the subject, you remain a bachelor."

"I! Oh, well, my young professor of polemics," laughed Reynolds, "your objection is well taken. 'Practice what you preach' is a sequence from which it is difficult to get away. Still, because the shoemaker wears the worst possible foot-gear, and the tailor the most dilapidated gar-

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ments, are no reasons why others should reject the comforts they produce."

"But the shoemaker and the tailor," rejoined the artist, following up his advantage like a diplomat, "say, one: that he is miserably shod, and, the other: that he wears his worn raiment because of the babies."

"Well," said Reynolds, "do as I say, and not as I do. Besides, we separate the wheat from the tare. There is seldom any life but a part thereof can be used as an exemplar; the good is to be emulated, the bad rejected. And, remember, the man that achieves is the happiest."

"Mr. Reynolds," said the artist, "you assign me tasks I am powerless to perform. Somehow you take for granted that no impediments are laid in the way of my progress. You clothe me with qualities of mind and heart which I do not possess. Since I began studying in a free school, endowed by your bounty, I have felt that you shaped my destiny. You have never dictated, it is true, but your clearer reason has blazed a way, and I have plunged upon the path, misgiving of my strength and endurance, but feeling that I should prefer to perish in the undertaking than to be seen abandoning the pursuit. I must tell you frankly that I never felt so weak and discouraged, so distant from the goal, as at this moment when your assurances are ringing in my ears."

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“Michael,” said Reynolds, “there is an old proverb that ‘It is always darkest before dawn.’ If I have succeeded in imprinting upon your mind and character lessons that shall be of service to you, that shall avail to your honor and that shall work to the glory of God in that you shall be a benefactor of mankind, then I shall feel that any instrumentality which you are pleased to credit to me has borne fruit acceptably to Him. My artist friend, we are to see less of each other in the future. Your life is beginning, the future spreads out before you; mine has reached its meridian. The road we have traveled in part together is separating. The influences of which you complain are becoming relaxed. The world is preparing to fall at your feet. In parting I have this favor to ask, never forget that you are a man and that the ties of a common fellowship unite mankind in one great brotherhood.”

“Whatever betides me,” exclaimed the artist, fervently, “I shall remember and keep your wish most religiously; and in whatever fields my fortunes may be cast, it shall be my constant endeavor to imitate the example of my noble benefactor.”

Mr. Wilstach of Philadelphia was announced at this moment. The new comer was a merchant prince of America, and one of the best known patrons of art of the United States. Edward Reynolds introduced his two visitors and the young

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artist forgot his shabby clothes in the pleasant companionship of his host and of the founder of the Art Gallery of Memorial Hall, Philadelphia.

It was 11 o'clock P. M. when Edward Reynolds accompanied the artist to the street in parting. While they stood facing each other a moment before passing the good night, the artist inquired to what it was the other had referred earlier in the day at the studio.

"Oh, yes, I do not want you to sell 'Renaissance' to the Israelite."

The younger man blushed.

"Then you heard what took place during the Jew's presence at the studio?"

"Yes, I confess to seeing him entering your rooms and followed," said Reynolds. "Jews are natural leeches and I did not care to have him pinch your neck. Promise me you won't sell to the Jew without my consent, or without at first giving me an option to buy your painting."

"Certainly, if you desire it so."

The two men exchanged parting salutations.

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CHAPTER XX.

The following morning Edward Reynolds slept later than usual. Troublesome dreams had disturbed his slumbers. The conversation he had had with the artist seemed to have been running ceaselessly in his sleep.

“Dreams do not always go contrarily,” he mused, “Alice *Richards* is forever separated from me by another’s shadow. If every impediment were removed from our union, I should fancy a ghost between us. Feeling as I do, what right has she to stand as a sentinel at the altar to prevent the marriage ordinance with another?”

“Is it true, I wonder, that nothing helps man forget woman, as well as woman; or is it some conceit of the brain? It sounds plausibly. My life is unsatisfactory. The picture that God paints upon every soul, as Lieb describes, is covered with a dark veil. I cannot see it for the heavy drapery. The fireside, wife and children is the central instinct of our nature, and because the hand of a fair iconoclast has mined the temple and broken the idols, is it reason why another fair hand should not restore order out of the chaos? I wonder if Lord Howe heard, while in America, of the broken engagement between Alice and myself.

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Miss Rivers, who came with him when he called to return the clipping, and to thank me for my part in the restoration of his grandson, is very beautiful. She is greatly interested in the school. Why should Alice have wanted that paper? Lord Howe might have given it to her. I wish I had found out what those stains were before sending it to her. Sometimes I fancied they were blood; but how in the name of the Seven Wonders could blood have gotten there? Alice is over in Paris with Countess Ratcliff. I trust she feels better after that last act of demolition. She and St. Clair must have made a picture feeding the hungry Schuylkill with my humble offerings. Still, I should like her child to have the property regardless of her pretty scruples to the contrary. I wonder if she, too, has grown old and gray. Woman shows less than man the ravages of time. Well, be she old and ugly, or young and beautiful as a houri, I shall never see her again. After Wilstach and his wife return to America, I shall take a vacation—lose myself. I may as well go upon the long promised trip to Switzerland one time as another. The doctor tells me I am overworked and require rest. What necessary and convenient members of society physicians are. I, overworked! The physician diagnoses a case something after this formula: ‘Tongue coated; pulse lacks elasticity;

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head dull and heavy; more or less insomnia; bad dreams; occasional pain in back,' and concludes by recommending idleness. There is scarcely a malady known to the profession, but indicates one or more of these phases. However, I have no leisure for his tonic. Matters here are active and not passive, to say nothing about the half finished book. Still, I might take the manuscript with me and complete it in Switzerland. That's what I will do. I'll find a batch of natives, in some secluded Canton, who can neither speak nor write a word of English, and among them I will rusticate, finish the book and rest. Alice will come to London, by and by, and, Merciful God, if I should meet her face to face! My heart would give one great bound and stop beating. I have fancied that in a strange place, far away I shall meet her some day face to face and fall at her feet, with only strength enough to tell her that I love her still. It would be euthanasia. I half hope it may be so. Some clever writer says: 'Love is a species of insanity.' There must be several varieties. I have known specious natures with capacity to adore every woman they meet—enviable creatures. Others again contract the disease and are forever immune. Why should I not marry Miss Rivers? The charm and grace of her person and mind are infinitely sweet and lovable. She talks, to be sure, but it is sense and

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music—every syllable. Lord Howe wants me to run down a day or two next week. Mr. Rivers is to be there. Nothing shall please me better than to go. I more than half suspect he wants the influence of my boys at the approaching election. I have kept hands off politics. Once having lived in Philadelphia, I naturally prefer to show slight acquaintance with statescraft. Political corruption of Pennsylvania reconciles one to residence abroad. A man displaying political acumen in Pennsylvania could not retain character if it were cemented in the corner stone of a church. I know the boys would do as I say; but I shall place no fetters upon their political opinions, even though Rivers—yes, and daughter, too—should ask me to do so. My head does thump. Guess I'd better dress and spin off a couple of miles. Walking is constitutional. Then I'll eat and get into the harness again. Wilstach says that Lieb is a genius; that he'll shake the Art world yet from center to circumference. I had him go up and inspect 'Renaissance.' He tells me the painting is worth a cool \$30,000. The walls of my rooms are destitute. I believe that I want that painting myself. To-morrow is opening day of the sales. That infernal Jew has convinced Lieb that twenty pounds is a liberal offer for the painting. Lieb would have sold it to him but for his promise. The boy does not dream of his com-

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ing fame and popularity. To-morrow, perhaps the day after, that young prodigy of mine will set the Art world agog. I'll set that hook-nosed Ike-stine a pace he'll remember to his dying day. He'll not quit bidding as long as there's a penny in the business. I'll make the unbeliever groan. Well, this will never do." Edward Reynolds sprang from the bed, shortly afterwards emerging into the street for the appetizing exercise of an hour's walk.

That afternoon three ladies were examining the paintings artistically arranged about the walls of an immense hall, situated upon one of the main thoroughfares of London. Mrs. Wilstach of Philadelphia was fully as enthusiastic as her husband over art. They had resolved to establish one of the finest collections in the United States, with the object in view of eventually bestowing the same on the City of Philadelphia. Mrs. Wilstach had requested her friends, Countess Ratcliff and Alice Eldridge, to accompany her to Exhibition Hall. She desired to visit the place before the sales commenced, in order to examine the paintings at leisure and to fix a value upon such as she intended purchasing.

"Mr. Wilstach," remarked his wife, "desires me to look closely at Renaissance, the initial production of one Michael Lieb, but I have not come across it yet."

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"This must be it," said Alice, who was a few paces in advance of her companions, pointing at a painting before her.

"Indeed, it is," replied Mrs. Wilstach, her eyes resting upon the large canvas in admiration. "It is a treasure. What sublime power of conception and execution! The technique is perfect," she declared, after a critical survey.

"Is it not singular we find such genius here?" inquired Alice, visibly affected by the painting.

"You see, the artist is unknown—without a reputation," explained Mrs. Wilstach, "and, doubtless, finds himself compelled to realize on his work. Again, he takes this opportunity of meeting the public. By the way, we have seen a number of high-grade paintings from amateur artists already, whose future will be made by reason of these sales. Their names will be advertised and blazoned before the public. The creations of their brush hereafter will come high. This picture is worth \$25,000 or \$30,000 in the judgment of Mr. Wilstach. My husband met the artist recently and is tireless in sounding his praise."

"Michael Lieb," read the Countess aloud from the lower corner of the canvas. "Surely one would not look for great imagination in the name," she volunteered, smiling.

"With German ladies," ventured the wife of the

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art collector, "his cognomen would be at a premium."

"What's in a name?" laughed Alice. "The artist is clearly of German origin. But Germany is the mother of many of the great masters. I am so much of a dilettante in art questions that I hardly venture an opinion beyond the nationality of the artist."

"He is one of Edward Reynolds' proteges," continued Mrs. Wilstach. "I don't remember my husband's mentioning how Mr. Reynolds discovered the talent of the artist. I recollect, however, his saying that Lieb is prouder than Lucifer, and has a right to be, because he is poorer than Lazarus. It appears that after making some progress at the easel, he refused to accept further assistance from his benefactor, and engaged as a clerk in a mercantile establishment of London, in order that he might be independent. Mr. Reynolds had to hunt up an uncle of the lad, who, of course, died conveniently, or pretended to do so, bequeathing the boy three thousand pounds. Young Lieb no sooner received his legacy, than he resigned his position and began mixing pigments, with the result of the painting before us. He still remains ignorant of the deception practiced upon him."

After the ladies had resumed their round of inspection, Alice returned and took her position

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before Renaissance. It seemed to talk back to her—to tell her of the unselfish life of the man with whom she had broken faith long years ago. The painting possessed a charm, a fascination for her. In the presence of that picture, she fancied she was standing nearer the great soul she had wounded so mortally. She reached out her hand and touched softly—even caressingly—the transparent diaphanous glass guarding the painting from too curious observers. It was an appeal for forgiveness. The touch chilled like the touch of a cold hand that had clasped hers years before, while the face in the background of the painting seemed looking at her reproachfully.

At the left of the picture a stack of fagots was piled about a fair form. A fanatic, representing ignorance and superstition, was seen kneeling and blowing a few embers to ignite the combustible material. The beautiful victim was pinioned to the stake, clasping a crucifix, her uplifted face containing the fortitude of a great faith. Stupendous heaps of ruins were scattered in the pathway of the vandalism of the Dark Ages, while a form in the background, bearing aloft in her right hand the torch of reason, was slowly advancing. Hideous monsters screened their eyes with long bony fingers from the effulgent rays of that beacon. The ages to come were to yield to that approaching vision. Light was to take the place

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of darkness; order, to come out of chaos; reason, to resume her sway; progress, with ceaseless march, was to traverse the universe. It was the dawn of resplendent morning breaking upon midnight. The atrocities of superstition, the violence of ignorance were seeking refuge from the rays of that quenchless torch behind ruins of their own desolation.

The thought was so vivid and realistic, Alice fancied she detected hope springing to the face of the form in bondage as the distant rays of illumination fell upon the promised holocaust. The figure at the stake represented the human race, the one in the background the resurrection of reason that had lain five centuries dead, while the hideous visages of ignorance and superstition were appalled before the blinding rays of that calcium light.

"This is to be sold to-morrow," muttered the solitary woman standing before Renaissance. It was to her excited imagination, sacrilegious. She incorporated that work of excellence a part of Edward Reynolds. He, in a way, had created, fashioned it, and it was to be vulgarly offered at public auction to the highest bidder. A strange light gleamed in the depths of those blue eyes. Alice Eldridge had formed a purpose. That painting should be hers, whoever entered the list of bidders.

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"Oh, that someone, among the hundreds that will be present beside myself, shall bid! bid! bid!" she exclaimed.

Mrs. Wilstach and the Countess at last found Alice. There was a suspicion of moisture upon those large, dark eyelashes.

"We have been playing the game of hide and seek. Answer, did we lose you, or, did you lose us?" demanded the Countess.

"I returned a moment," replied Alice, "the painting haunted me. I shall bid to-morrow for Renaissance."

"'A moment!'" repeated Mrs. Wilstach, "why, we have been searching for you the past hour; and I warrant you have been crouching like a fair devotee doing penance before the monstrosities of the Sixteenth Century priestcraft, as conjured in the creative brain of Painter Lieb."

Alice and the Countess accompanied Mrs. Wilstach to the latter's apartments upon leaving the gallery.

The Duke of Berwick had seen the announcement of Mrs. Eldridge's arrival in the society columns of the London press, and had already conventionally called to pay his respects to Alice, meeting for the first time her friends.

"I hear favorable reports of the duke since coming into possession of the Berwick estates," declared Mrs. Wilstach. "He has dropped his former

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associates. Sycophants are not easily shaken. To illustrate, one of the number called, as soon as he had ascertained the location of the duke after his return to London, to pay addresses to the new titles and to congratulate his former companion. The adventurer was given such a reception that the others, awaiting results outside, have not fully recovered from surprise, nor have they had the temerity to invite a similar experience. The story of the interview is reported as follows:

“‘Why, how do you do, Duke of Berwick?’ exclaimed the caller, gushingly. ‘I have been dying to see you. Your new honors fit you charmingly,’ extending a welcoming hand. The duke pretended not to see the proffered fingers.

“‘You appear in tolerably good health,’ said the duke; ‘I hope appearances are not deceitful.’ The visitor was unabashed. His type of men are not easily crushed. ‘I believe I have had the pleasure of meeting you before,’ continued the duke decisively. ‘And it strikes me that I once requested the loan of a trifling sum before my departure. If you will be so kind as to advise me of the extent of my obligations, I shall reimburse you promptly,’ extracting from his pocket a well-filled wallet.

“‘Oh, no,’ corrected the visitor uneasily, ‘I am on no such miserable errand. I—in fact, some of the boys are giving a banquet at —— Club.

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We felt, don't you know, that it would be more natural-like to recognize your familiar face at the boards. We have reserved your old seat for your pleasure. Besides, as you remember, I did not happen to have my purse with me at the time you mentioned the subject of a loan.'

"Well, I regret to disappoint you in club circles, but my engagements demand much of my time.' Whereupon, going to a cabinet, he secured a late photograph of himself, which he brought and placed in the hands of his visitor.

"I am more than delighted!" exclaimed that gentleman, well pleased with the token of esteem.

"Hereafter,' remarked the duke deliberately, 'when you have those sinking spells to see me you may gaze upon that,' indicating the profile, 'and economize cab hire. I trust we have no further use for each other.' And calling a servant, he directed that his visitor be conducted to the door."

Alice was glad to learn of the alterations in the manner of the duke's life.

"Perhaps his visit to America improved his habits," suggested the countess, glancing at Alice inquisitively.

"More likely it was the company he kept," retorted that lady.

"Probably," smiled Mrs. Wilstach; "it occurs to me that it was intimated he was quite devoted."

"Oh, yes, and a voyage, too!" chimed in the

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countess. "I shall yet have my friend for a neighbor."

"Well, give him a sufficient period of probation," protested Alice.

"Capital idea," remarked the countess; "we will leave fate and the future to solve the problem."

"Suppose both are anticipated?" queried Alice.

"How so?" inquired the countess.

"Explain," demanded Mrs. Wilstach.

Whereupon, under a solemn promise of secrecy, Alice related the proposal and its somewhat equivocal motives, concluding with the subsequent redeeming feature of the duke's conduct in making a second declaration after a knowledge of his good fortune. There is no better proof that women can keep secrets than that they are confided in by others of the sex.

"It was honorable of him," said the countess.

"Unimpeachable," declared Mrs. Wilstach.

"Really, all that could be asked, and more than might be expected," criticised the countess, shaking her finger deprecatingly at her friend.

"After a voyage across the water in Mrs. Eldridge's company, who, in his right mind, would twice make a declaration to my *prochein-ami*?" devouring Alice with a look of affection.

"What is his limit?" suavely asked Mrs. Wilstach.

"Never you mind," declared Alice, "if each

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offer is actuated by better motives than its predecessor, he can make as many as he chooses ; I shall entertain them kindly."

The afternoon of the following day the works of the struggling and indigent artists were to be offered to the highest bidders. This course had been found of advantage upon several similar annual occasions, as vast assemblages were attracted, either by curiosity or with intentions to make purchases. Many paintings were purchased by philanthropic persons at fancy prices in order to encourage and relieve the pressing wants of tyros.

In many instances bids had been marked upon the paintings by individuals who had seen them, but who were not to be present at the sales. These figures, as a rule, were far greater than the intrinsic value of the pieces, being offered because of personal interest in the artists. Nearly all the paintings, and there were hundreds of them, were the works of comparative beginners, who had either formed influential acquaintances among patrons of art or had ingratiated themselves with families of wealth.

It was amusing to hear the comments as the hundreds of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen passed in review before the paintings.

"I wonder what that fellow sees here," indicating a daub of a landscape, "that warrants the extravagant figure of fifty pounds?"

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"Fifty pounds is the equivalent of two hundred and fifty dollars, is it not?" inquired an American of the speaker.

"Nearly so," was the reply.

"Well, then," replied the practical Yankee, "on our side of the pond a commission of lunacy would be awarded at the instigation of the relatives of the fellow that offered two hundred and fifty dollars for such painting."

"Here is a case of 'Fool and his money soon part company,' pure and simple," said another, pointing at a worse bargain than the former.

One of these merry spectators stumbled over an object and turned angrily, "A d—n Jew! What are you doing here?" he demanded of the Israelite, "tripping up your betters? Every infernal Jew should be colonized. The whole race is a stench in the nose of decent people."

The Jew made no reply, but from those baleful eyes a look full of hatred and malice shot forth at his tormentor. If a glance could kill, someone has said, the Jews would be great assassins.

"Hush," said the companion of the speaker, giving his comrade's arm a pinch; "let up on your diatribe. That is Ikestine—immensely rich. There is a saying that he has a mortgage on every principality in England."

"Satan has a greater one on him," declared the

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man who had nearly fallen over the feet of the Hebrew.

Further altercation between the tongue of one man and the eyes of another was interrupted by the announcement of the auctioneer that the sales were about to commence. Before offering any pictures, however, he briefly outlined the object and purpose of the annual gatherings. The auctioneer highly eulogized the collection and confidently hoped the talented artists would be repaid for their skill and labor in a manner commensurate with their many merits and deserts.

As the sales proceeded the bidding was oft-times spirited as the several bidders took a fancy for the same painting. Great lords and ladies were discernible among the miscellaneous crowd. And these same ladies and lords were indirect means of hundreds of people being present who otherwise would have wished the struggling and indigent artists in perdition.

In many cases the artists themselves were present. Seats had been provided in the more central part of the gallery, and resting in one of the chairs was a fair-haired man of equivocal age. He might have been nineteen or thirty years of age, as far as anything in his appearance indicated. His face showed the marks of hard study and close confinement. He was lounging in a half-reclining attitude, evidently in deep abstrac-

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tion. Twice only his reverie was broken; once upon hearing the Jew speak to someone in charge, whereupon that functionary marked "TWENTY POUNDS OFFERED," in chalk on the corner of a painting. It was "Renaissance." Thereupon the Israelite turned and smiled seductively upon the man of equivocal age.

"I thought it would bring forty pounds," mused the dreamer, "by the way the others are selling."

The Jew shook his head and the artist relapsed again into abstraction. And again he was aroused from that reverie. A well-dressed woman was standing before the painting that had taken months of labor to produce. Her lithe, supple figure was motionless. Her graceful, sinuous form appealed to his artist sight and imagination. Her deep interest in "Renaissance," as evidenced by the prolonged observation, was the first feminine compliment that the work of Michael Lieb had ever received. In a few moments more the auctioneer would reach the place where she was standing. As the intervening pictures were rapidly offered and sold, the heart of the artist beat so loudly he imagined it to be audible to the thousands of people gathered in the vast hall. He half-imagined the woman a fixture—some creation in wax—that had been silently placed in position before "Renaissance," when she was joined by two other women. Whereupon she turned a face, the

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most beautiful, *spirituelle*, that his eyes had ever beheld.

"How much am I offered for this? Here is a work of real art"—the Jew frowned—"the artist has christened it 'Renaissance.'" The good-natured crowd jostled each other to get nearer.

"Here, who is the artist? What is that name in the corner?" asked one.

"Lieb," said the auctioneer.

"Ah, yes; thank you."

"Lieb—Lieb!" exclaimed a half-dozen in chorus.

"Who ever heard of an artist by the name of Lieb?" A burst of laughter greeted this merry speech.

The man in the chair shuddered. It was the torture of vivisection to his sensitive soul.

"There is some merit in the painting; it is not altogether amateurish," volunteered one, noticing for the first time the offer of twenty pounds in the corner.

"Great imagination."

"Fairly executed."

"It's all right."

"Deucedly clever."

The woman who had been standing before the painting retreated a few paces and leaned against a column. The man in the chair was in a state of semi-consciousness; the coarse comment, coming

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with the rapidity of the report of firearms, had dazed, bewildered him.

"Twenty pounds is offered," cried the auctioneer.

"Twenty-five," bid the Duke of Berwick, grandiloquently.

"Six und dwenty," piped the Jew.

Someone in the assemblage bid thirty pounds.

"Thirty-one."

"Thirty-two."

"Three."

"Four."

"Five." The bids were rapid, and were made by persons standing promiscuously among the crowd.

"Who said it was a daub?" laughed a bystander.

"Where is the fellow that offered twenty pounds in chalk?"

"Left," some wit replied.

"One and thirty-five," in the Hebrew language.

"Here we go again," shouted the auctioneer.

"Seven."

"Eight."

"Nine."

"Fifty pounds," said the Duke of Berwick. The artist began to indulge in visions of a tailor-made suit.

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"Five thousand pounds." It was a man's voice, well on the outskirts of that vast concourse.

That voice galvanized the man in the chair. The previous noise subsided. Even the craning of necks to catch a glimpse of the bidder caused no sound.

"Ten thousand." The bid proceeded from the great column supporting the dome of the amphitheater. The silence became more intense; the dropping of a pin would have sounded like a Vulcan stroke.

"Eleven thousand," said the man on the margin of the crowd.

The artist in the chair became livid, rose, reeled to the side of the male bidder.

"Don't!"

"Stand aside," said the person addressed, imperiously.

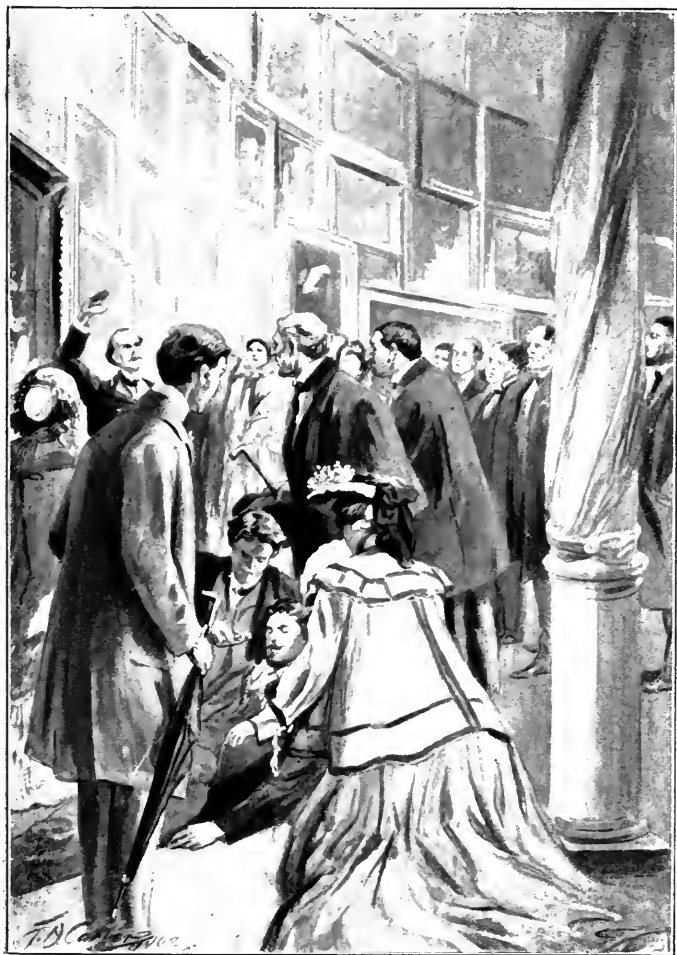
"Twelve thousand," quietly from the vicinity of the column.

The command was unnecessary; the artist fell at full length upon the floor.

"Thirteen——" The bidder stopped suddenly, bent over the prostrate man and unbuttoned his collar.

"Stand back, please; the painter has fainted—stand back."

"Won und thirteen thousand! Fader of Abraham! Won und thirteen thousand pounds."



“ The Woman Fanned the Face of the Artist ”

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A woman had spread her handkerchief under the head of the man lying on the floor.

"Thirteen thousand and one, once," cried the auctioneer.

The eyes of the Jew began to emit flashes of light like a scintillating coal.

"Thirteen thousand and one, twice," shouted the seller.

Once or twice the hands of the man and woman touched in attentions to the artist.

"Thirteen thousand and one, the third and last time."

The woman knelt and fanned the face of the insensible man.

"Fair warning," cried the auctioneer.

"Take my flask," said Lord Howe, who had finally succeeded in reaching his friends.

The woman raised the head of the painter, while the man forced a swallow of spirits between the set teeth.

"And sold," cried the auctioneer.

The Jew rubbed his hands, after the fashion of his race when satisfied of a bargain.

The heads of the man and woman were so close some golden filament brushed against the former's cheek.

The artist opened his eyes.

"Have I been dreaming? What does it all mean?" said Lieb in a dazed way.

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"It means," said Edward Reynolds, raising the artist to his feet, "it means that you are one of the foremost living painters of the world."

Reynolds turned to thank the woman staring at him with great wide-open eyes. Her face and throat were crimson; the man's turned livid, then gray as the face of a corpse. He tried to speak—God help him!—but could not. The man, who had charmed vast audiences, whose eloquence had electrified the scholars of England, whose philanthropy had touched the very centers, fumbled at speech—staggered to a chair and sank upon it. Alice Eldridge took a step forward—someone glided past her.

"Oh, are you ill, Mr. Reynolds?" It was a girlish voice, the face infinitely sweet and beautiful. Lena Rivers stood looking into the white face of the friend of all humanity.

"Are you satisfied?" hissed a voice in Alice's ear, while the fire flashing in the eyes of the basilisk is not more venomous than that burning in those of Lord Howe as she encountered his gaze. Alice made no response. She looked at his distorted face, then her glance went to the chair, her eyes once more became riveted upon the bloodless countenance of Edward Reynolds, when they sought the face of the girl. It was a picture that was photographed upon her brain. Silently she took her place by the side of the column, and,

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speaking to the auctioneer, her white lips faltered,
“Proceed with the sale of ‘Renaissance’.”

“Why, madam, ‘Renaissance’ is sold.”

“Sold!” she exclaimed. Then a white wraith
glided from Exhibition Hall.

After seven years Edward Reynolds and Alice
Eldridge had met, had gazed into each other’s
eyes, had parted without speaking.

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CHAPTER XXI.

"My carriage is at the door," said Lord Howe to Edward Reynolds. "If you and Mr. Lieb will accompany Miss Rivers and myself, we will drive on the boulevard. Afterwards I will drop you at your apartments."

"It is close here," replied Reynolds; "a little fresh oxygen will be as good as a tonic. What say you, Lieb?" the speaker's eyes wandering to the spot where a moment before Alice had been standing.

"Well," said Lieb, "I have no desire to remain. I am not used to being ogled."

A few moments later, as the party were driving along at a lively gait, Lieb suddenly leaned forward, his gaze fixed intently upon a couple of pedestrians; then he touched the arm of Reynolds. "Look, quick! That is the woman that bid 12,000 pounds for 'Renaissance,'" exclaimed the artist.

"She?" cried Miss Rivers. "Why, then, she is your competitor, Mr. Reynolds," turning to that gentleman.

Lord Howe raised his hat.

"You know her?" asked Lieb.

"Yes," said the nobleman, angered at the un-

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usual pallor of his friend's face; "she is the widow of an American lumberman."

"She is the only child of Banker Richards, of Philadelphia, a multi-millionaire," corrected Edward Reynolds, hurt at the sneering tone of the nobleman.

"You! acquainted with her, also?" inquired Miss Rivers, looking steadily at the man by her side.

"Who is the gentleman?" asked the artist.

"The Duke of Berwick," answered the nobleman. "English hawks are fond of American sparrows," he continued cynically.

It is needless to state that the hour passed on the boulevard was a quiet one, so far as conversation was concerned. Each passenger in the carriage was intent upon thoughts of his own.

"I believe," said Reynolds finally to the nobleman, "I will be driven to my rooms. I have much to do yet to-day."

"Why don't you take more rest?" asked Miss Rivers. "You positively look ill and worn out."

"I shall," replied Reynolds, alighting from the vehicle.

"I wish I looked haggard and miserable," thought the artist, "if it would elicit such anxious expressions from the young lady." The two gentlemen touched their hats and the carriage passed on its return to the gallery, Reynolds and the artist soon finding themselves alone in the library.

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"Mr. Reynolds," said Lieb, "I expect to wake and find I have been dreaming."

"Ah, well, my boy, it will be a pleasant awakening. You had no idea of your genius. No wonder the extent of your discovery deprived you momentarily of your senses."

"This day has been one of revelation. Why," he exclaimed, brightening up, "it is the anniversary of our meeting four years ago."

"And the day of our parting," said Reynolds sadly.

"What do you mean?" cried the artist, looking keenly at the speaker.

"Ah, Lieb," said Reynolds, "how little you know the world! With the change in your fortunes, don't you realize that London will be fawning at your feet? Yesterday you were obscure, to-morrow you will be a celebrity. In less than an hour a dozen reporters will have located you, and you will be quizzed about every incident of your life. To-morrow the press will picture you most flatteringly. You will be called upon and feted. You have won an entree into the homes of the most exclusive families of London." The young artist was watching the speaker without elation at the inviting prospects.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Reynolds, that if all is true you have said, if fortune is within my grasp, if the gates to fame are thrown wide open,

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if society should dazzle; more, if the rarest and best gifts of life, those that are prized most, should come to me, do you mean to say that I am to forget the friend whose steadfastness, whose encouragement, whose strong arm has supported me? If it is because of this you say that to-day is the day of our parting, as true as there is a God in heaven, you make me regret that my efforts have been crowned with success." The young man's eyes were moist.

"No, not that, Lieb; you mistake my meaning. One who knows you as intimately as I do never could question the loyalty of your friendship. But a new life has opened before you. Your responsibilities are increased. It would be selfishness on my part, imbecility on yours, to decline the welcoming hands extended to you. I have trained you for the race. I have walked by your side to the starting point. I have held the signal of the start. I have whispered words of cheer, but the handkerchief has dropped, the race is on, the trial at hand. Do not think that I shall not see you as you struggle on, that I shall not mix in the crowd at the finish and greet your victory with a heart overflowing at your triumph."

"You make me feel," said Lieb, "that my gains are as nothing compared with my loss."

"Lieb," said Reynolds, "we each have our work to do. We must face those duties fearlessly."

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Someone has said, 'To live content with small means, to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy not rich; to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages with an open heart; to bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, avail occasions, hurry never. In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common.' This is the manual I place in your hands. No safer guide ever directed the course of human conduct. Man is controlled by circumstances. He is plastic as wax under the manipulation of fate. A few years ago I sought occupation for distraction. I believed I could remain at the front as long as it served the purpose and then quietly abandon the self-imposed labors. Therein I erred. The happiness and usefulness of thousands of lives depend upon me at this moment; one departs, two arrive. Instead of being young shoots engrafted to my life, I am the soil in which the roots have taken start. The small people under my charge are in a chrysalis state, and I must stay, however severe the strain, until they are grown sufficiently strong to stand alone. My mode of life has become a fixed part of me, more than habit; yet, to say nothing has been yielded in return, to say that I am not rewarded would be untrue. There is nothing in the wide

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‘ world that I can do, giving such rich returns, as that which I am doing. In future the burdens must be heavier. Every moment of every day of the weeks, months and years must find me occupied or my thoughts will wander, and wandering thoughts are hell. Oh! Lieb, for the forlorn, damned, wretched souls for which idleness, aye, be the door ever so little ajar, admit a pack—a horde—of demons that rend and tear the vitals, work is the panacea. Work, in fields the most remote from those other fields, where the feet strayed and dallied in the blissful ignorance of happiness.” The speaker had risen and was walking, talking as much to himself as to his companion.

Lieb regarded Reynolds in amazement. He had never beheld the American while similar emotions were surging in the latter’s breast. He was in awe, and awe inspiring pity more than fear, of the man who had befriended him, and who, like the mother bird, now that his feet were steady and the wings strong and firm to bear his weight, was turning him adrift to face the battles of life alone. In his love for his benefactor he was jealous of each little ragamuffin entitled to a place in the man’s affections and benevolence. There were repeated pulls at the door-bell.

“They are come,” said Reynolds.

“Who?” inquired Lieb.

“The reporters and representatives of the press.

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They are anxious to begin the work where mine ends." The voice was unnatural. "See, they are impatient! Hear them ring. Ah, that was a pull! It is a summons, my boy, to fame. Thank God, you can answer it." Lieb moved in the direction of the door. "Wait, Lieb; don't bring them in here. Take them to an inn. Another time you should be welcome; but I shall be busy packing the balance of the afternoon and evening, and wish to be as much by myself as possible."

"Some gentlemen at the door want to know if Mr. Lieb is present," said the bell boy, projecting his head into the room.

"Tell them that he is," said Lieb, "and will see them directly." After the boy had disappeared, the artist turned to Reynolds and inquired, "You say you are to be busy packing?"

"Yes."

"Going away?"

"A few weeks. I haven't had a vacation in four years. Am I not fairly entitled to one?"

"I believe so," said Lieb. "I wish I were going with you."

"Oh, no. You must not run away. Wait and meet your new acquaintances. But, by the way, Lieb, if you hear any one inquiring for me say that I have just dropped out of sight for a month or two. I am tired to death and am going to vegetate somewhere."

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"Shall I state where you have gone?"

"No. I don't know myself," said Reynolds. "But I shall find a Mecca where woods, fields and rivers are on the map." Here another reminder at the door-bell suggested to the two men that the hour of parting had arrived, and taking the artist's hands in his firmly, Reynolds said, "Well, be a good boy, Lieb, during my absence. Don't let your newly found honors turn your head completely. Keep your heart in the right place."

"Have no fears," replied Lieb seriously. He was loath to part with his benefactor.

"Well, good-bye," said Reynolds.

"Good-bye," said Lieb, with a lump in his throat. "I hope you will find the rest you seek."

The next moment Lieb, surrounded by a half-score of reporters, was walking in the direction of a nearby hostelry, Reynolds following the party with his eyes until the last one had passed from view.

"A bright future awaits the dear boy," said the watcher, closing the blinds.

The next morning a carriage drove up before the apartments of Edward Reynolds, and Lord Howe, accompanied by his colleague Rivers and the latter's daughter, alighted. In another moment the door was opened by Lieb, who had arrived earlier.

"I am afraid," said he, "that you are disap-

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pointed. Reynolds has flown, bag and baggage. No one about the establishment seems to know where he has gone."

Michael Lieb half fancied he detected a look of dismay and pain in the face of Miss Rivers.

"I have coaxed papa to let me sit for a picture," she said absently, "and intended seeing you during the day to arrange for the sittings. 'First come, first served.' You will be overwhelmed with engagements directly."

"Do you think so really and truly? You say this to make me happy," said Lieb, studying her face closely, his eyes revealing pleasure at the reference to future professional success.

"Well, sir, if you doubt what I say," grievously, "you just remember that no less a personage than Miss Lena Rivers is the first to tell you that your talents will be in present demand; and also, sir, bear in mind, please," she continued solemnly, pointing her finger sibyllinely at him, "that in consideration of this meritorious service all rights are reserved to the *very* first sitting."

"I am not apt to forget," said Lieb, bestowing an unconscious glance so full of admiration upon his first fair patroness that the profusion of blood in the lady's cheeks warned him of his indiscretion.

"When am I to come?" she inquired.

"I intended taking a month to get my bear-

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ings," replied Lieb. "All one's calculations are spoiled by success. I was quite happy and content in Ikestine's attic. But the material alterations in my circumstances and prospective applications from the *beau monde* necessitate the selection of a different studio."

"Oh, no; let me come where 'Renaissance' was painted. I shall like to be painted there. Honest and true," she continued, upon beholding the consternation in the artist's face, "I shall enjoy it."

"You would not say so if you were aware how cramped and destitute the atelier is. Your enthusiasm would turn to dismay."

"All the merrier!" cried Lena. "Your words are added incense."

"Well, as you like, if you don't mind desolation and rats."

"Oh!" shuddered Lena, her ecstasy of imagination making hasty descent to those realms of feminine aversion for rodents. A woman will face an uncaged lion with more courageous heroism of mind than she displays upon the unexpected approach of a little inoffensive and sinister-eyed mouse with a body no bigger than could be comfortably accommodated in her thimble.

"I thought rats lived in cellars," said Lena, "and dark tunnels, and——"

"Rats," corrected Lieb, "live everywhere. They

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are ubiquitous. In China they are esteemed a great delicacy. Rats are a study. They are profound philosophers. Did you ever notice the similarity between the eye of a rat and the eye of a Jew?"

"The eyes of a rat and the eyes of a Jew," laughed Lena, "what a comparison! Who ever heard the like before?"

"Well, Miss Rivers, if you had seen Ikestine offering twenty pounds for the picture, looking longingly at 'Renaissance' and lovingly at me, on the one hand, and the rat watching me at the frugal meal and waiting for the stray crumbs, on the other, you would admit the likeness."

The old nobleman failing to learn any tidings of Edward Reynolds, after making diligent inquiries of the aged housekeeper and the several professors, returned with his colleague and joined the young people.

"Hear anything?" asked Lieb of his lordship.

"Not a word. All they can tell me is that Hardsides has consented to preach during the absence of Reynolds."

"Papa," said Lena, "Mr. Lieb has promised to paint my portrait."

"Let him paint the moles and warts and crow's-feet," replied her parent.

"He'll not flatter her," said Lord Howe.

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“I could not if I would,” whispered Lieb inaudibly.

“If there are crow’s feet,” declared Lena, “it is because you have been so cross and cruel to me.”

“Children are never spoiled by crossings,” insisted Rivers.

“When will you be ready to commence?” asked Lena of the artist. “You can charge papa any price you want.”

“When will you be ready to come?” answering her question by asking one.

“Any time, if it is to-morrow,” she replied.

Hereupon Lieb stated that as soon as he could get established in suitable quarters he would notify her, renewing any previous promise that hers should be the first portrait painting he would undertake when permanently located, whereupon the two old gentlemen and Miss Rivers took their departure.

“What a beautiful girl she is,” mused Lieb to himself, as he watched the party driving away. “I shall advertise for a studio this afternoon.”

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CHAPTER XXII.

"Mrs. Eldridge," said the Duke of Berwick, overtaking Alice as she was leaving the gallery, "I cannot see you venturing alone upon the streets without offering to accompany you. Will you permit me to walk with you?"

"Indeed I am grateful," replied Alice.

They proceeded in silence. Alice was preoccupied, so was the duke. He had seen and understood. How those two beings had met, when and where, he knew not. But he felt as certain as that he was walking by the side of the woman that there was a past between them; that that past brought them face to face in the present; while the past, present and future were shrouded in mystery. It was all confused and nebulous. Her face was pale with mental suffering. His heart was filled with a great pity. He longed to take her in his arms and comfort her. The Duke of Berwick loved and revered Alice Eldridge. A carriage drawn by a spirited span of blacks dashed by. Armorial bearings flashed in the sunlight on the gilded woodwork. It was Lord Howe and his party leaving the auction sale. By chance the two pedestrians encountered the gaze of the

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occupants of the vehicle. The Duke of Berwick felt the woman give an involuntary shudder. She seemed to drag her feet over the pavement, tottering like a person intoxicated.

"Are you ill?" he inquired.

"No," she replied; but her face was colorless.

"Mrs. Eldridge," he said, summoning a cab, "it is some distance yet. I believe it will be pleasanter riding." She suffered him to assist her to mount the step. The duke gave directions to the driver and sprang in after her, closing the door. Alice was shivering as with a chill. The duke spread a robe over her lap and sat down in the opposite corner of the seat. He did not speak to her. Alice was grateful for the consideration. Finally the cab stopped at its destination. The Duke of Berwick helped the lady to alight, opened the wicker gate for her to pass, lifting his hat as she did so. Alice had taken several steps when, with a sudden impulse, she paused. The duke was standing in the same position at the gate as when she entered it. She came back to him.

"Duke of Berwick," she said, "you have been good to me. I thank you very, very much. I should invite you in, but I am not well."

The duke bowed without speaking, turned suddenly and walked away.

"I wish the Duke of Berwick were my brother,"

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said Alice to herself as she entered the house, while the duke muttered as he retraced his steps, "I wonder what power that man has over her, if——" he stopped, "if——" and the thought in his mind, whatever it was, was checked again. "Fudge! I would kill him with as little compunction as I would take the life of a rat."

Alice Eldridge, it is true, was the first to tell the Duke of Berwick his faults, stripped of all artificial embellishment; yet it was also true she was the first woman whom he had ever met that treated him as a man, as an equal. She had discovered to him a knowledge of himself.

Many natures require rough usage to bring the nobler parts to the surface. Diamonds are mined with picks and shovels.

Upon entering the house, Alice sat down upon a settee listlessly, without removing her wraps. She was dazed and bewildered and—cold. She held out her arms toward the fireless grate, rubbing her hands. There was not a piece of furniture in the room she recognized. She arose and began to pace the floor aimlessly.

"Lord Howe warned me if I valued my peace of mind never to look upon the face of Edward Reynolds again. It was base deception! Edward loves me!" she exclaimed passionately, the rich blood coursing through her veins like ichor. "He loves me—I know it—I feel it. Those eyes

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looked it; those mute lips proclaimed it; and I—
'Oh, God, I love him! After all these years I confess it. I love him—love him—a million, billion times better than in those olden days. Then human beings and gods were all alike. I have learned wisdom with years. I should have gone to him, but—ah, who is that woman? She loves him also. It was revealed in her face as she darted past me—such impudence!—to his side. She is trying to snatch him from me now that I have found him. What right has she to hasten to his side—to inquire his health? I loved him first. Shall she have precedence over me? She was sitting by his side in the carriage, too. Mine is the prior claim. Why, if he is ill, I will nurse him, not she; if he is well, I will love him so much that he shall be ill, in order that I may make him well again. Good God, how my heart is beating! Stop this clamor," she exclaimed, clasping her hands over her bosom, "while I think. No, no, I must not think. Thought shrivels up my brain, while something rises in my throat and chokes me. Mad men think—even in their sleep, 'tis said, and chatter, chatter, chat——"

Alice Eldridge was standing in front of a large mirror. With the first glance at the picture reflected back, she ceased speaking. Once a painter went mad. His friends did everything to remove the blight from the unfortunate man's mind, but

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to no purpose. One day the artist escaped his guard and took shelter in an adjacent wood, where suffering with thirst, he knelt by a pool to drink, and his reason was restored upon seeing his image reflected. Alice Eldridge no sooner recognized the face in the mirror than she was Alice Eldridge again. No one knew better than she the utter hopelessness of her love. She knew that Edward Reynolds was a proud man; that his pride would never consent that he should ask any woman to be his wife that had once broken an engagement with him to marry another. She knew all too well that if she *could* go to him, and if she *could* lay her heart bare at his feet, he would draw the robes of offended pride about him and say to her, "You told me once that your happiness demanded this sacrifice of me. I have made it. I have suffered. I love you as I did then, but I will never take to my breast a woman and fancy the arms of another around her."

The white face in the mirror fascinated the gazer. It was the reflex of the immensity of the devastation within. Never before had her life been deluged by the same remorseless floods that were sweeping over it. She had contented herself with the sweet, intoxicating possibility of the distant but certain fruition of her secret love. She had taken it for granted that her affections were placed at compound interest, and that, by and by,

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she should enjoy the principal increased by usury; but as she stared at the white face in the glass Alice Eldridge saw the woman whose investment of the affections had been swept away instead of augmented, leaving a white, pitiful bankrupt. Hers was the leprosy of the heart. But a little while ago she had felt his breath upon her cheek; the escaping tresses of her hair had touched his face as he and she, unknown to each other, were bending over the artist. Even at the remembrance her white face grew whiter. The sum of her loss was total, crushing, absolute, irreparable. Love! The divine mystery of the heart! Love! before whose vestal robes peasant and prince, subject and sovereign, tremble and turn pale. Love! of all the passions, hate, avarice, and ambition, the most terrible—omnipotent, supreme! the attribute of God in the human breast. The man or woman whose nature has not been subdued by the noblest coronation of the heart lacks proof of divine origin. Alice neither heard the countess as the latter entered the room nor as she came toward her. She was absorbed, intent upon watching that other self in the glass.

“Alice, are you ill?” said Countess Ratcliff.

The great wide eyes traveled from the mirror to the face of the speaker.

“What is the matter with you?” continued the countess, throwing an arm around the waist of

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her friend. She was frightened by the vacant stare, by the colorless face.

“I don’t know—nothing,” murmured Alice. She was trembling in every limb. It was the tremor of the soul at the last sad obsequies of the heart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Some ten miles from the city of Sion, on the banks of the Rhone, stands a solitary house, erected on a slight promontory that affords to the eye in any direction a pleasing panorama. Broad acres of arable land were in a state of excellent cultivation, while herds of the best blooded cattle grazed in the distance. The majestic sweep of the river winding sinuously away resembles a monstrous serpent stretched in the valley below, while still farther off the spires and steeples of the distant city look like the tombs of a place of sepulture. The vegetation resembles a vast bank of green, restful alike to both eye and mind, while the eternal snow-clad peaks of the distant glaciers reflect a million prismatic rays as the sun of a perfect day shines upon them.

Switzerland, the Land of Contradictions! The warmth of the valleys, the frigid blasts of the mountains, the majestic rivers, all in a sense contiguous; the natural defense of France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. It is not strange the spirit of freedom displayed by its inhabitants should partake of the bold nature of the rugged environments.

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Edward Reynolds had found his Arcadia, the place where he should rest—the spot of all spots where he should forget. To him it was the most delightful retreat on earth. The salubrious atmosphere, the mild and equable temperature, the wonderful development of vegetation, the excellent condition of mountainous roads, the smaller streams splashing into the Rhone in turbulent cascades, the sky-tipped mountains, bordered half-way up their perpendicular sides by virent fringe, crowned with Alpine snow, suited and soothed the fancy. In his imagination the warm breeze of the valley, so pregnant with life, health and enjoyment, was a foundling sheltered in the immaculate arms of those eternal uplifting peaks.

He was in search of just such a hiding-place, and, dismounting his horse, approached the half-hidden house to secure accommodations. The people did not speak English, and, upon making his wishes known to them by pantomime, were opposed to the idea of entertaining strangers, as evident from the earnest consultation engaged in among themselves. There were vigorous shakes of the head, which were only overcome by the persistent wayfarer by inducements of a financial character not to be despised by well-to-do farmers, even in Switzerland. At the conclusion of negotiations he was assigned a large, pleasant room

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to be kept in order during such period as his liberal payment continued.

Alone at last, without fear of discovery; hidden, as it were, from the great teeming, throbbing centers of population, he could finish his book and forget, and the horrible pain in his head should cease.

* * * * *

"Papa," cried Alice, as her father entered the room, "mamma, Eleanore and myself have been discussing ways and means for an overland trip into Italy by the Great St. Bernard Pass." They had been a week at Sion.

"The fact is, everything has been arranged satisfactorily but obtaining Mr. Richards' consent," declared Eleanore. "You, it seems, were smoking at the time of the conference."

"Oh! What contented wretches! Verily, you have designs upon our lives. We shall be jolted to death," exclaimed the banker deprecatingly.

"The roads were never finer. We have made inquiries. What a pity to pass such perfect weather cooped up in detestable railway coaches," said Alice.

"It might be pleasant driving by easy stages over mountain roads," admitted Mrs. Richards.

"Now, candid, what is the opinion of Mr. Richards?" queried the countess, turning to that gentleman.

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"Outnumbered, as usual. I may as well submit patiently," said he, by no means averse to the arrangement.

"The trip will have the advantage of novelty," interposed Alice.

"I say, grandpa, do be coaxed," essayed Madge, joining her grandfather's adversaries, in the meantime dove-tailing the fingers of his hands together.

"Persuasion and subjugation are identical. Of course I acquiesce."

"Papa, you are perfectly charming," cried Alice.

"When yielding to your sway," assented the banker.

"Well, I most always have my way, don't I, dear papa?—that is, when you are willing."

"Conceded," admitted the banker, "if you allow by implication that I am always charming."

"I would be an undutiful child otherwise," laughed Alice graciously.

"Insist upon a direct answer," suggested the countess.

"I have burned my fingers too often in her red hair," replied the banker sapiently, "not to have learned discretion."

"Mamma, what was the color of papa's hair originally? Since I have been old enough to be interested in such matters I have never been able

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to tell, by the remainder, the shade of the departed."

A bare spot the size of a silver dollar on the banker's crown was a subject upon which he was known to be sensitive.

"Nearly the same as yours, irreverent child," replied that lady.

"Much as I abominate baldness, I have never used hair tonics to restore the growth," implying that he was reconciled to the loss by the objectionable color.

"When shall we start?" asked Mrs. Richards, interrupting the tilt.

"Order up the carriage, papa," directed Alice serenely.

"Everybody be in readiness in the morning," said the banker. "I shall have to express the luggage, except such as we need for our journey. It is a fine pack of gypsies we'll be. Eleanore, you must be the fortune-teller, and Alice collect the bills. She is a capital hand in worming money out of people."

Traveling by private conveyance in Switzerland is a luxury. Travelers find no monotony of scenery. Driving in any direction, one enjoys a grand panorama from start to finish, especially in the watersheds of the noble rivers, the Rhone, Po, and Rhine. Tourists, artists, poets, and scholars imbibe the beautiful and picturesque of Nature's

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handicraft here as nowhere else. Switzerland is the poet laureate of the universe.

As the tourists, upon the following day, were being driven over the splendid roads, enjoying to the full the glories of the ever-changing landscape, Alice remarked: "We are indebted to Eleanore for this pleasure," joining the gaze of the others upon the distant glaciers.

"To appreciate this sublime scenery, one needs see it," said Mrs. Richards.

"Nature's kaleidoscope," asserted the banker.

"Does one tire of such picturesqueness, or is it always vivid and fresh?" queried the countess.

"Mamma, why is there no floods from the melting ice and snow?" asked Madge, to whose young mind those elevated peaks were a constant and perpetual menace to the valleys below.

"The snow and ice, my child, at that height, do not thaw."

"But it looks so warm and pleasant up there," insisted the child.

"People that go up in balloons have their hands and feet frozen," explained the banker.

"Is the sky so cold?" quizzed the girl incredulously.

"Look at that cloud!" exclaimed Mrs. Richards. But the eyes of all were resting upon the perpendicular pyramids of feathery vapor, parallel columns of undulating, downy whiteness, rising from

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beyond the crest of mountains in the azure sky.

"We are to be waylaid by a storm," predicted the banker. "Perhaps the curtains had better be drawn."

"Not yet, papa," pleaded Alice, who was lost in enraptured contemplation.

"In times of peace prepare for war," continued her father.

"What rivalry between the snow-clad peaks and the billowy banks of mist," remarked the countess.

"Not so," said Alice. "One is obedient to the slightest variation of the wind," pointing out the inaccuracy of the comparison. "I am partial to the ponderous immobility of the perpetual snow and ice."

"That young artist Lieb would make his fortune here," declared the banker.

"Where are the white wings now?" asked Mrs. Richards. The banks of snowy clouds had been succeeded by a sable slate-colored base.

"They have enveloped the glaciers also," retorted the countess.

"Not so," said Alice, "merely separated us from the banks of snow. The sun still shines upon those immutable, obdurate crests."

"Touch up the horses a bit," the driver was directed by Mr. Richards, "and if you find a stopping-place, we had better take refuge until the storm passes."

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"Near the point where the road breaks over the hill," the driver informed his passengers, "there is a place where we can stop."

"How far may it be?" inquired the banker.

"A mile or such matter," explained that functionary.

The carriage rolled up to the door none too soon. In response to an inquiry whether or no the party could remain until after the storm had spent its fury, the old lady to whom the question had been put hastened away, to return a moment later, accompanied by a middle-aged woman who spoke English.

"What do you desire?" she asked kindly.

"To remain until after the storm passes, as well as to have the horses and carriage taken under cover."

The nature of the visit was communicated to the proprietor, who at that moment arrived. The rugged features of the old husbandman denoted German origin. He looked at the threatening sky, and nodded affirmatively, whereupon the interpreter informed the tourists that they were indebted to one Mr. Bonner, an extensive landowner, for hospitality.

"Mr. Bonner," the woman explained, "is a man of influence in the Canton. Besides holding a number of petty offices, he represents the Canton in the legislative department of the Swiss govern-

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'ment. My position," she added, "in the household is that of nurse to a sick gentleman."

The new guests were conducted into a commodious reception-room, modern in its appointments, where they were invited to make themselves as comfortable as possible. Outside the storm still raged, and the prospects of renewing the journey that day greatly diminished. As the noon hour approached, the tourists were asked to partake of the mid-day meal. And such a dinner! It was a typical farmer's repast. Fried chicken and duck, scalloped eggs and innumerable vegetables, placed upon the table in large platters, were all that an epicure could desire, while the dessert of raspberry pie, cake, coffee and cream caused the smallest member of the refugees to look with complaisance upon the storm that drove them to an establishment so well provisioned.

"Let's hang up a week with the legislator," said the banker.

"We shall seek in vain for a more ideal spot," said Eleanore.

"This is paradisaical," declared Mrs. Richards, with emphasis.

"I was on the verge of making the same proposition," said Alice, "when papa anticipated me."

"Great minds run in the same channels," he laughed.

"But we have to reckon with the host," inti-

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mated the practical Mrs. Richards, "and, if I mistake not, he is obstinate."

"I offer the following: Resolved, that the Hon. Horatio S. Richards, of Philadelphia, of the United States of America, be appointed Ambassador Plenipotentiary to negotiate with his royal highness, Landowner Bonner, in arranging and concluding terms and stipulations in securing accommodations for a stay of one week at the latter's mountain home in Switzerland. All in favor of the motion make it manifest by the usual sign," cried Alice.

"Aye, aye," ejaculated the ladies in chorus.

"Contrary, the same."

"There being no dissenting vote you are unanimously accredited with plenary powers of the commission," said Alice, saluting her father respectfully.

"Well, I didn't know that you were such an accomplished parliamentarian," said the banker. "But I now notify you," he continued, "that I will arrange for the balance of the warm season, providing the provision holds out."

"Where is the woman that speaks English?" inquired Mrs. Richards. We may as well learn our fate first as last."

"Grandpa," exclaimed Madge, bursting into the assembly, "come and see the chickens and goslings and baby ducks."

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“Here, stay in out of the wet. You are no waterfowl. Do you want influenza?”

“Oh! the nice old gentleman carries me, and I hold the umbrella, and he talks just like the geese and the ducks,” explained the girl.

“Guess I’ll go outside and get acquainted,” commented the banker.

“Remember, papa, what depends upon first impressions.”

“You watch from the window and see how I can rise diplomatically when occasion demands,” suggested her father; “women, alone, stoop to conquer.”

“Wait a moment and I’ll go with you,” and Alice dived down into a grip, fishing out a gossamer.

Mr. Bonner was joined by his late companion, reinforced by the child’s grandparent and mother, the proprietor being by no means displeased because of the increased number. He was proud of his ancient and imposing home; his immense, well-watered lands and finely bred herds grazing thereon. No one, showing keen appreciation of these material evidences of his prosperity, failed to instate himself in the good opinion of the law-maker. He entertained annually a number of legislative colleagues, a love of good-fellowship being one of his strong points, or one of his weak ones, as the reader prefers.

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Scarcely had the trio reached the side of the old landowner, when the nurse made her appearance. These two exchanged a few words in a strange dialect, whereupon the lady was moving away, when Mr. Richards addressed her.

"Madam," he said, "will you kindly act as interpreter a moment between this gentleman and myself?"

"Why, certainly," she replied cheerfully.

"We desire to remain here a few days, and, providing you will intercede in our behalf, you shall lose nothing by the transaction," promised the banker. "Tell the proprietor that we are very favorably impressed with his pleasant home, and the delightful scenery hereabouts, and desire nothing better than permission to remain his guests a week or ten days at the outside. We are willing to pay any price he may be pleased to impose for accommodations, in advance or otherwise."

The lady repeated the wishes to Mr. Bonner, who was somewhat perplexed by the proposition. He favored his would-be guests with a swift but comprehensive inspection. Evidently he was satisfied with the observation, but it was going to be troublesome to have foreigners about a week or longer. Again, there was one sick man in the house already, by reason of his willingness to oblige. He told the interpreter that he would leave the matter with Mrs. Bonner and

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advise them later. So the matter was hung up on the decision of the mistress of the establishment. The nurse, excusing herself, returned indoors, not omitting, however, to mention the nature of the application to Mrs. Bonner, seeing fit to volunteer on her own behalf that "they were nice refined people."

A moment after the mediator entered the building, a lad was seen galloping off in direction of Sion. The banker produced his cigar case and handed it in-a-hope-to-be-better-acquainted manner to the legislator. The latter took one, lighted it—enjoyed it. That cigar went a great way in making the chances of the petitioners "preferred stock." After considerable hesitation, it was decided by the good man and his estimable lady that the refugees might remain; and the tourists, after the trying suspense, were acquainted with the result of deliberations and shown their respective rooms, which the happy travelers proceeded to set in order, or rather disorder, by unpacking such limited dressing apparel as they had provided for the journey.

"Alice," called Eleanore to Mrs. Eldridge, who had reached the foot of the stairs on some errand to the sitting room, "tell Madge to come up."

"Yes," Alice answered back.

"Did you hear? Tell Madge to come up; I have something for her."

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"I hear," replied Alice up the stairway. As Alice faced about, she confronted the nurse. The eyes of that lady were fastened intently upon her.

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, "you startled me."

"Alice," repeated the nurse, slowly, "is your name Alice?"

"What did you say?" called Eleanore, who was busy in her room at the head of the stairs, supposing herself addressed.

"Nothing," called Alice. "What do you wish?" she inquired, turning to the nurse.

"I beg your pardon. I heard the lady above address you as 'Alice,' forgetting that there are hundreds and thousands of Alices, and spoke without thinking. The sick man," she continued apologetically, "talks of Alice and Lieb and—good God! Are you dying?" cried the nurse instinctively supporting the woman, who had clutched the banister.

"Hush!" whispered Alice. "Conduct me to him. Take me where I can see—myself unseen. See!" she continued impatiently, "I am well," suddenly throwing the nurse's arm from her, and standing firm and erect.

"Follow me. You may go to his bed with me," explained the nurse, "he knows no one."

Alice followed her guide through the long corridor, the sound of their steps muffled in the heavy

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carpet, finally entering a large bed-chamber. The invalid's face was turned toward the wall.

"I say, Lieb, there is nothing helps a man forget women as well as woman," muttered the invalid.

"That is the way he talks all the time," whispered the nurse.

"Heavens! What's got into the boys? They'll tear the building down over my very head, unless they are stopped. Here, you young pandemonium, let up on that—I'm coming, can't you wait a moment—I'm coming, I say. They are all deaf; or the boys make such noise no one can hear. Well, I'll have less confusion," trying to rise.

"Edward, lie back—so—upon the pillow." The voice was sweet, rhythmical, steady. Its action upon the sick man was magical. He obeyed submissively, watching her curiously with febrile eyes.

"Well and good, you stop the noise then and stay here. What right have you to go away," he continued complainingly, "and remain for hours and days?"

"You must be quiet now, if you wish me to stay," whispered Alice, tears welling up in her eyes at the haggard face of Edward Reynolds.

"Quiet? No one is quiet here. The longer one stays the louder the shrieks. There, she is

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gone again. You see, she will not stay. Poor girl, she died ever so many years ago, and they buried her in my heart. It's a shame, they should bury the dead in the heart."

"Do you know him?" inquired the nurse of the unhappy woman.

"Yes."

"Is he your husband?"

"No," shivered Alice, placing her cold fingers upon the feverish temples of Reynolds.

"Where is the ring?" demanded the man in his delirium, catching and examining the white hand. "Oh, I remember, it is in the trunk, there in the golden casket. Bring it me, and I will place it again upon your finger. Do you hear?" he demanded of the nurse, an angry flush mounting to his temples. "Lift the top of the trunk and fetch me the ring." The nurse started to obey.

"No, no," cried Alice, endeavoring to release her hand.

"The doctor says he must be humored," said the nurse, moving in direction of the trunk, and raising the cover in order to obey the whim of the invalid, not for an instant believing she should find a casket at the place indicated. But, true enough, there was the golden casket. She brought and placed it upon the cover of the bed. He let the fingers drop, lifted the case affectionately and

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unhasped the cover, revealing a diamond ring. It was their engagement ring.

"It has been in the casket so long. Diamonds require light. Alice, give me your hand. Do you hear, Darling? Your hand! Fair and white and beautiful—my hand! Why don't you place it in mine?" But Alice's hands were otherwise engaged. They were pressing against something that was rising in her throat, that was stifling, strangling her.

"Ah, I say," shrieked Reynolds, "hold out your hand."

"You must humor him or he becomes violent."

"I cannot—oh, God, the mockery of it!"

Reynolds had risen on one elbow, his face convulsed in passion. The nurse caught Alice's hand and pushed it within reach of Reynolds.

"You shall answer for his life otherwise," murmured the nurse.

Reynolds took the cold fingers, which were passively permitted to remain in his. "See," he exclaimed, his manner changed, placing the ring upon her finger, "when I come back from college, we will be married, won't we, Darling? You'll be true to me, Alice, faithful and true as steel, won't you? Ah! I love you so, my golden crowned idol! Flashing—flashing, my beloved one, see it sparkle!" He drew the white marble hand and pressed it against his cheek. "Mine, forever

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mine." Slowly the eyes closed, and he passed into a fitful slumber. Alice attempted to remove her hand, whereupon the sick man clasped it with both hands. "Mine, forever mine."

"Will you stay with him, while I eat my dinner?" inquired the nurse.

"Yes."

As the nurse disappeared, Alice fell upon her knees by the bedside, disturbing the slumberer. "Mine, mine, mine," he murmured.

"Stop, stop," she breathed, "or you will kill me." Involuntarily she caught the white hands and kissed them. "I love you," she whispered, "I can tell you now. I have loved you always. Edward," she begged piteously, stooping forward till her face almost touched, "try hard—listen—repeat after me—I—forgive—you."

"NOTHING HELPS A MAN FORGET WOMAN AS WELL AS WOMAN!" a voice replied vacantly from the pillow.

At some noise Alice sprang to her feet and turned. Lord Howe and a stranger stood in the doorway. The hand of the old nobleman had been laid upon the arm of the stranger to arrest further progress. Lord Howe went forward and taking Alice's unresisting hands in his, said brokenly, "My poor child, you have taught me

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how to beg forgiveness. Repeat after me—"I forgive you." "

"I forgive, as I hope to be forgiven," she said solemnly.

The stranger was the physician from the city.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

Alice went to her room complaining of a severe headache and remained until supper was announced. She was aware that Lord Howe was in possession of her secret; but, she also knew that the old nobleman was too honorable to divulge it.

As Lord Howe and the physician quit the patient's room, they encountered Mr. and Mrs. Richards. The old gentlemen stared at each other a moment and grasped hands heartily.

"What in the world brings you here?" inquired the banker.

"Edward Reynolds' illness," replied the nobleman. "Why, what brings you?" he continued.

"Mr. Reynolds sick and in this house?" interrogated Mrs. Richards.

"Are you not aware of the fact?" he asked, looking at them in turn. "Indeed, he is, and the physician informs me that he is intractable to his treatment. Dr. Croft is considerably discouraged and advises a consultation. The chief trouble seems to be the brain, superinduced by some shock. I wired a celebrated brain specialist of London to come at once before starting here from Sion with Dr. Croft."

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"Is he so dangerously ill?" asked the banker, anxiously.

"Dr. Croft tells me the odds are very much against his recovery," brushing away a tear.

"It is fortunate we came this way," declared Mrs. Richards, "we shall remain until he is out of danger. Our traveling with carriage and the storm seem much like the hand of Providence."

"Yes, 'The hand of Providence,'" repeated the nobleman, thoughtfully.

When Edward Reynolds had been notified that he was likely to have a severe illness, he indited a letter to Lord Howe, giving Mrs. Bonner directions that it should be posted only in event of his dangerous sickness. As he grew worse the physicians finally advised that the letter be forwarded. The letter was symbolical of its writer. It read:

"To the Right Hon. Lord Howe,

"London, England.

"My dear Sir and Friend:—I am ill, and instead of improving, constantly becoming worse. The physician tells me I am elected for a long siege of illness, and that the outcome is problematical. While he was so kind as to allow that he did not want to alarm me, he suggested that if I had anything of special importance to attend to it should be looked after without delay. Naturally, such frankness brings terror, but not so in my case.

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Packing up my earthly belongings for a long journey consists in making a will, which I have done, naming you my executor with power of substitution, providing you find the duties too troublesome. The instrument is enclosed herewith. I have reminded the good people, to whom I am indebted for accommodations that this letter is to be posted only in case of recovery being extremely doubtful. May God bless you.

“Yours in farewell,

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The prompt response in person of the old nobleman showed in what regard he held his young friend.

The banker in turn related to his friend how they had been driven to take shelter from the storm, with which the reader is already familiar.

“What has come over Lord Howe of a sudden?” abruptly asked the banker, addressing his wife, as they were retiring a few nights later.

“In what respect?” inquired that astute lady, who had noticed a change in the nobleman’s conduct toward Alice, and naturally curious to learn if her husband had been attracted by the recent graciousness of manner.

“Why, in regard to Alice. I did think, for some cause or other, he fairly hated her, and here he is dancing attendance at her heels con-

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stantly. A slave could be no more subservient or devoted," answered the banker.

"It is undoubtedly due to the fact," suggested Mrs. Richards, "that he is much interested in Reynolds, and Alice is indispensable to the recovery of the invalid. He refuses to take medicine or nourishment, unless administered by her."

"Well, it's no difference," emphasized the banker, "she's not going to make herself ill, because of this unaccountable whim of a sick man. We want to do all in our power, to be sure," he continued reflectively, "but the health of our daughter is of far greater consequence than the irrational obstinacy of delirium."

"I have remonstrated with Alice," said her mother, showing her maternal solicitude. "It does no good. Three days and three nights he has taken no medicine except from her hands."

"I shall do something beside remonstrating," declared the banker, resolutely. "If she has no consideration for herself, we have."

"What do you propose doing?" inquired his wife, hopefully. She had great respect for her husband's resources in an emergency.

"We will hitch up the horses and point toward Italy," he replied sagely, believing that he had cut the Gordian knot.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Richards, shaking her head disappointedly. "Alice would not budge a step."

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The specialist from London was very particular in directing that Mr. Reynolds must be kept perfectly quiet, inasmuch as the least excitement is liable to prove fatal to the patient; that the invalid must be humored and cajoled, if necessary, and that the medicine must be given according to directions. It's a very critical case, and Alice seems the only one that can do anything with him. He minds her like a child."

"Do you suppose she loves him?" asked the banker, who was able in no other way to account for the conduct of his daughter.

"I am afraid so," admitted Mrs. Richards, after a prolonged silence.

"Why 'afraid so'?" interrogated the banker.

"Mr. Reynolds is proud, and, even if he has not forgotten her, his pride and sense of injury would not allow of advancement on his part. It would be lifelong suffering for both."

"I don't see why," philosophized the banker. His courtship and marriage had been unattended by mishap.

"I do," said Mrs. Richards, quietly. "Alice broke her engagement with him to marry Mr. Eldridge." Then after a moment's silence, she continued, "Reynolds makes her wear her old engagement ring, and talks just as he may have done before the troth was broken. Alice tells me she does not mind it in the least. 'Why should

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I?' she asks, 'so long as he is out of his head, and can possibly know no better.' But a mother's eyes are keener than a daughter's power of concealment."

Alice was beginning to show the effects of long vigils, the dark lines under her expressive eyes giving the deep transparency of her complexion a marble-like color.

If she had yielded to woman's weakness and given way during the first hour, there was no subsequent sign. She was a woman upon whose strength the life of a human being rested. She had intuitive knowledge it was so; and that being was the man she loved. There had been excuse for her failing. Alice had believed herself gazing upon the face of Edward Reynolds for the last time, when he was in Lord Howe's carriage on the streets of London, and to find him dying—ah, well, Alice Eldridge was not the only woman in this big world, who has cried out in bitterness, who has drawn aside the cold robes of pride to admit to the portals of the soul the warm rich streams of the human heart.

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CHAPTER XXV.

Yes, thank God, he would live. The dark anxious hour of uncertainty had passed.

"My brave little woman," said the London specialist, "I have met, during the course of my practice, many noble types of women; but you have given me a new ideal of womanhood." The physician had run up to Alice's room to satisfy himself how she was bearing up under the operation of the day previous.

A stranger had been brought from the city for the purpose of having blood from his body transmitted to that of the sick man. At the very last moment, his courage had failed, absolutely refusing to submit to the operation of venesection.

"The delay before we can procure someone else," had expostulated the surgeon, "will prove fatal to the patient."

But regardless of all argument, the big fellow feigned some excuse to absent himself from the room, and taking advantage of his liberty fled stealthily in direction of the city.

"Doctor," said Alice, with a mysterious light in her eyes, "I am thankful he has gone. I do

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not want his plebeian blood mingling in the veins of Edward Reynolds."

"What nonsense!" replied the practitioner, "this is no time for sentiment. The life of that man," indicating the slumberer, whose feeble breath was fluttering in the grasp of death, "is weighed in the balance, and that villainous scamp has disappeared. I am nonplussed!" exclaimed the surgeon, dejectedly.

"But suppose there should be a volunteer?" inquired Alice, calmly.

"There are no volunteers for work like this," he replied, out of sorts, then looking at the recumbent form upon the bed, he seemed communing with the intricacies of his profession, "It means delay; and hours,—nay, moments are precious. I shall have to dispatch for a medical student from Sion. I believed I could save that man's life."

"Doctor," said Alice, "there must be no delay."

The physician regarded the speaker angrily without daring to reply. To be told by a woman, at the moment of his discomfiture, "Doctor, there must be no delay," was provocation for language more vigorous than elegant.

The surgical instruments had been arranged conveniently on a table by the bedside, while Edward Reynolds' arm, wasted and emaciated by

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disease, bared to the shoulder, was resting upon the cover.

"Proceed with the operation." Alice Eldridge rolled the sleeve of her dress to the shoulder, revealing an arm of snowy whiteness. "I am the volunteer. You must accept my arm as a substitute. There is no cowardice in my blood."

The surgeon looked at the resolute woman in blank amazement, in stupefied incredulity.

"I heard you tell that horrid man, that there is no danger and comparatively little pain. Why do you hesitate?"

"We must not think of this," declared the physician, vacillating between the sacrilege of that perfect arm and his duty to the dying patient, "without first consulting your parents."

"My parents should interpose no objection to my resolution," stated Alice, calmly, "still," she continued, "this shall remain a secret between you, the nurse and myself." And then to taunt him with dereliction of his duty, she continued, "there are your instruments, here are the two arms, placing them side by side, "and according to your own words, the man's life is in the balance."

"Are you equal to the pain?" he inquired gently, looking at the slight delicate woman before him, forgetting for the moment his profession.

"Am I equal to the pain?" she repeated me-

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chanically, her beautiful angelic face reflecting a look that might have been seen upon the faces of witnessing angels when the suffering of the crucifixion ceased.

"Transfusion, as I understand the operation," said Banker Richards, addressing his wife and Lord Howe, who were seated beside him upon the veranda while the operation was performed, consists of the transmission of blood from one person to another, an incision being made in the veins of the individuals operated upon for the insertion of a tube to admit the passage of blood. The fluid is forced from the healthy system into the debilitated one, by the stronger action of the normal person's heart."

"I believe so," replied the Englishman, "It is becoming quite common in surgery, especially when there has been excessive hemorrhage. Reynolds has bled copiously. Still, he may be indebted to this very fact for the preservation of his life. The congested brain has been relieved of the pressure of blood; but on the other hand, he is left in such a weakened state that there is no vitality remaining to build upon."

"It would seem that something could be discovered to be injected into the veins that should answer the same purpose; or that would be even yet more efficacious," remarked the banker.

"Doubtless there will be. Surgery to-day is

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the most progressive of any of the sciences," replied the nobleman.

"Who is this man that consents to the operation?" inquired Mrs. Richards, "we should reward him as he richly deserves."

"Someone the doctor picked up," replied Lord Howe, "I didn't learn his name."

"Depletion will do him good. He is as red as a lobster," commented Mr. Richards.

"I cannot bear to be present at a surgical operation, unless it is necessary," remarked Lord Howe.

"My case, exactly," said the banker.

"I could never reconcile the theory of alleviating suffering by inflicting it," admitted Mrs. Richards.

"They are a good while about the operation," said Lord Howe, nervously, "perhaps, I had better glance into the room. It may be I am needed. Whereupon the nobleman rose and started in doors.

"Do you feel exhaustion?" inquired the surgeon of Alice, alert with the details of the operation.

"No, I am not minding it," she replied.

"His pulse is much stronger. The color is beginning to show faintly in his cheeks," continued the surgeon, beguiling the woman from whose body that very blood had escaped, at the same time delighted with the success of the operation.

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The physician was grasping a wrist of each in either hand noting the pulse.

A tint like the first delicate blush of a ripening peach was diffusing itself over the invalid's cheek. Lord Howe peeked in at the door, and, not seeing the stranger, quite naturally supposed the operation had been performed. He tiptoed toward the bed, and was standing over the couch, drawn to the bedside, upon which Alice was reclining, before he realized what was taking place. A nameless, speechless horror was uttered by those eyes, quivered in the face, shook the old form as the truth dawned upon him.

"It was a matter of life and death," explained the surgeon, feeling that an apology was in order, not failing to observe the indignation, anger and amazement in the old man's face. "The scoundrel fled," continued the physician, and——"

"I was out there," hissed the old nobleman dangerously, "are all men dead that a delicate woman must be cut and gashed? good God!"

"Old blood would not answer. This brave woman volunteered, in fact, commanded me to proceed."

"Go," whispered Alice, "and keep mamma and papa from entering the room."

Lord Howe was at the point of ebullition. He knew he should commit some unpardonable folly if he remained, and fled from the room, in fact,

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from the house. As he was passing Mr. and Mrs. Richards, he shouted to them not to go in, as it would disturb, if not endanger, the life of the patient. The old nobleman walked, or rather trotted, down the road at a pace he had not set his feet during the past twenty years. He was finally concealed from view of the inmates of the house by a hedge of thorns.

“You infernal old idiot!” he exclaimed, striking the unoffending foliage furiously with his walking stick. “Yes, you blooming idiot!” he howled, pointing his finger at himself, subjectively, in the meantime suspending the vigorous assault upon the hedge. “I tell you that that woman—she isn’t a woman, she’s—an angel. I feel like thrashing somebody. That booby is not deserving of her little finger. If he don’t marry her, d—n me! if he don’t marry her,” renewing his onslaught upon the hedge, I’ll—I’ll horsehide him. Good God, what an atonement! Why, we tortured that woman, I with the rest—body and soul. Even her fair, tender flesh is mutilated! She gives her very heart’s blood to that simpleton. I don’t care a continental if he is sick. Such men ought to die! On the seamy side of seventy-two,” he continued disgustedly, “and just getting to know woman.” The vindictive and vituperative old gentleman was pretty well exhausted by the violent expressions, and returned to the house an

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hour afterward in a more settled frame of mind.

The next day he was jubilant. Reynolds was conscious and pronounced on the high road to recovery. The wandering mind had come back to an enfeebled and wasted body. The countess slipped a message in the nobleman's hand from Alice. The lines had been written by unsteady fingers.

"Say nothing to Mr. Reynolds of our presence, until I see you," it read. Lord Howe was always suspicious of a brief letter in feminine chirography.

Mr. Richards was evidently oppressed in more ways than one. The mutterings of enraged men were heard in his beloved country. Conciliation and reason had been found unavailing. Blinded, passionate, infatuated men were dividing a nation. Already the lurid flash of internecine war was seen around the world. War, fratricidal war, bursting forth in the incipency of what was to prove the most deadly and sanguinary struggle of history. In addition to deploring the awful catastrophe that seemed unavoidable, the financial interests of the banker were numerous. Every post brought him urgent summons to come home without delay. His affairs in America required his personal supervision. Yielding to the pressure of his and his daughter's interests, he decided to return, leaving his wife, daughter, and the Countess to continue

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their tour. It was thought best that they should return to Sion upon the following day, where he was to bid them farewell. The doctor had assured him that it would be safe for Alice to travel. Inasmuch as no one was allowed in Reynolds' room, except the nurse, Alice's secret wish that they might get away without his knowledge of their presence, was being assisted by a force of circumstances over which they had had no control. She had bribed the nurse, and Lord Howe, she felt confident, would not refuse her that one request. Alice dispatched the Countess to ask the old nobleman to favor her with a visit. He accepted the invitation with alacrity.

"I am glad to find you so far convalescent as to be sitting up," he said coming forward and taking her hands in his broad palms.

"And I am glad your lordship is so far interested in me," she admitted archly.

"You are just simply magnanimous to pardon the savage I have been to you," he declared with a mixture of joy and contrition.

"Indeed, I have nothing to pardon. Your conduct was quite natural. I never failed to understand your motive."

"Impulsive men are blunderers. Your father is to be envied the possession of such a daughter."

"You know not the troubles such envying ones escape," she laughed. "By the way," she con-

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tinued, changing the subject, "I suppose papa has told you of our intended departure on the morrow."

"Yes, he mentioned it. For sometime I have shared his confidence in respect to the unsettled condition in America. He was in hopes of sparing you and your mother any needless anxiety. I regret the prospects of peace between the North and the South are so discouraging."

"Oh, that strife and bloodshed may be averted!" she breathed, the voice and words an invocation.

"I hope so with all my heart," he said.

"Lord Howe," said Alice, scarcely above a whisper, "we are on the eve of departure. In all probability we shall never meet again. I have asked this interview that I might crave one boon in parting," she paused to note the effect her words were producing.

"You know in advance," he replied, "I shall deny you nothing. So tell me what it is you wish, my child."

"That you never disclose the knowledge to Edward Reynolds of my, or my parents' presence at this house."

Lord Howe dropped the hands he had been holding.

"Who is to tell him?" he asked.

"No one, if I can prevent it," she continued.

"Is it your wish that he remain in ignorance of

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the presence of the brave and noble woman to whom he is indebted for his very life?"

"Yes, even so, as long as he lives. But you greatly exaggerate——"

"No, I exaggerate nothing. This is a sin you are committing, and you are asking me to become an accomplice," he said, reprovingly.

"I should neither commit, nor ask another to commit crime," replied Alice, proudly.

"But your parents, are they content?" he remonstrated, hopelessly.

"My parents have confidence in their child."

"O! so have I," he cried, "but don't do this; tell me first, is it an absolute, unavoidable necessity?"

"His future happiness, in a large measure, depends upon it," she said, solemnly.

"And yours?" he asked.

"Mine—mine," she stammered, "yes, even mine."

Lord Howe bowed to the will of Alice Eldridge.

"I am so grateful," Alice exclaimed, attempting to seize the hands of the old nobleman.

"Please don't touch me," he said with something of savagery in his voice.

"There are things of which a woman may not speak," said Alice, letting her hands drop to her side.

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"And if I refuse?" questioned his lordship reservedly.

"I shall be wretched and unhappy."

"Mrs. Eldridge," said he, slowly and impressively, "before I promise, confess to me candidly, frankly, as you shall answer sometime before your God, is this silence for the best?"

"It is," her eyes did not falter before the fixed, steady gaze of the questioner.

"Then I engage my solemn word that your presence here shall never be betrayed to Edward Reynolds *as long as I live*."

"Oh, thank you!" Her earnestness showed the relief that his commitment to secrecy gave her. Without sharing her enthusiasm, the old nobleman walked from the room more mystified and bewildered than ever.

Later in the day Alice and the Countess were in the flower garden pruning roses for the sick room. The former was responding promptly to the strong constitutional vitality of her nature. Edward Reynolds was out of danger. That was the touchstone of the rapid restoration of her health and spirits. It was a faultless day, with just enough breeze from those snow-belted peaks to make outdoor employment inviting, and the two women loitered a large part of the afternoon in the parterre, the Countess chattering away of her husband, children, and home in sunny France.

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Countess Ratcliff was beginning to show symptoms of nostalgia.

During the evening the nurse opened the door of Alice's room and entering unannounced, whispered to her trusted confederate of the sick chamber:

"Mr. Reynolds is sleeping, if you will sit with him, I shall take a walk in the cool twilight. I should greatly enjoy a few moments' stroll."

Alice arose, and, approaching the stand upon which her portemonnaie was lying, removed a number of crisp bills, which she placed in the hands of the nurse.

"Remember your promise," she admonished.

"Indeed, I will; but I dislike taking your money."

"I have plenty, and it will enable you to live without such hard work. At least a nest egg for a rainy day."

The lamp, burning dimly upon the center-table, scarcely lighted the room sufficiently to enable the women to discern the form of the invalid.

"I shall return in the course of twenty minutes," whispered the nurse, retiring softly.

After the nurse had gone out, Alice crept silently to the bed and gazed upon the slumberer. Her hands were locked before her. Five, ten, fifteen minutes and Alice Eldridge had not stirred. It

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was the parting hour. She should never see that face again. It was the farewell between body and soul; the finality of life and love. She moved to the trunk softly, and raising the cover, took the ring and caressed it; kissed it; pressed it to her bosom; held it so the subdued rays of the lamp were reproduced in a hundred miniature flashes. With tearless eyes she restored the trinket to its place and lowered the cover of the trunk, returning to the bedside. Twice she stepped to the stand upon which the lamp was burning—twice she retraced her steps to the bedside. The room was so gloomy and dark! There was an irresistible impulse to let the light shine upon his face, and reapproaching the stand, she took the lamp and cautiously walked to the bed. She felt that she must see; that in that parting, she should not be robbed of one single feature of the beloved face. In the cryptic photographic processes wrought in the laboratory of the soul, her memory should treasure every feature and lineament. The brightness of the light disturbed the sleeper, and he moved uneasily. Alice raised her hand swiftly, hesitated—lowered the light, turned it out; but Edward Reynolds' eyes had opened and rested for one brief instant upon a white spectral face before the room was plunged into darkness.

"Alice!" murmured the sick man, putting his hand out involuntarily toward her.

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"What do you wish?" inquired the nurse, who at that moment arrived.

"Light the lamp," gasped Reynolds.

Alice groped her way into the hall more dead than alive. When the nurse had relighted the lamp, Reynolds stared about the room in a dazed way in search of the vision.

"You have had a refreshing rest," said the nurse, placing a cordial to his lips.

"Did any one stand there a moment ago?" he demanded before drinking, pointing at the vacant place.

"I was here a moment ago," she replied truthfully.

"Oh, well," he murmured, swallowing the contents of the glass and closing his eyes wearily, "I wonder if I shall always have strange dreams and see strange faces."

The following morning, bright and early, Landowner Bonner and his good wife stood at the gate, watching their recent guests disappearing in the distance, while several additional pieces of gold resting in the good matron's hand, caused that woman to repeat the language of the nurse, "They are nice refined people."

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CHAPTER XXVI.

Michael Lieb had shown feverish anxiety in engaging a studio. Something like a thousand pounds sterling from the proceeds of the sale of "Renaissance" had been expended for furniture and rugs. Notwithstanding the squalid poverty of his previously cramped quarters in the Jew's attic, Lieb evinced the extreme æsthetic taste of his art for the beautiful and elegant. Again, he was suddenly possessed of radical and revolutionary ideas regarding his personal appearance. The most fashionable tailors were employed and kept busy in cutting and fitting, until a number of stylish suits were finished for his use. He was known to have been very indifferent in these matters. Scarcely a week elapsed, during which time Lieb had been the busiest man in London, before Miss Rivers received a note that he was waiting her convenience.

"Lieb's greatest luck, after all, is the perfect *sang froid* of a born aristocrat. There is not a man in the universe so unkind as to connect him with that Jew's attic." The satire was not without a suspicion of envy, the less fortunate speaker was more handier with words than with the brush.

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But there was more to it. Lieb was in love. This always new and engrossing sentiment, more than likely, had had its share in the artist's metamorphosis. Love is a great renovator. Lena Rivers had replied to his note on dainty paper, a fugitive scent of rose and heliotrope clinging to the delicate stationery. This young lady explained that she would come the third day following to have the first sitting. He treasured that note as a miser prizes his gold. Michael Lieb made the acquaintance of time during the next three days.

He thought the probation would never come to an end. The nearer the all eventful hour approached, the more perversely time dragged. Lieb accomplished nothing during the period. He was monopolized by the one absorbing sense of the slothfulness of the movement of the hour hand. When a man is the victim of that grand passion, he considers everything a personal affront that separates him from the object of his adoration. A man's first experience in love is something after the order of a freshman at college. He is hazed, dazed, and crazed, as some one has been clever enough to observe.

Lena Rivers was punctual to the hour. She ran up the steps with the elasticity of youth, health and a redundancy of spirits that seemed to find relief in violent exertion.

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"Why, how cozy you are!" she exclaimed with the freedom and *insouciance* of a girl that had been petted and indulged all her bright young life, examining rapturously the arrangement of the studio. The artist was in a tremor of ecstatic delight. He feared to look the bewildering vision of feminine loveliness in the face, and darted into an interior room to recover his mental equilibrium. A maiden aunt of Miss Rivers came with the young lady and took occasion, during the painter's absence, to reprimand her effervescing charge for making numerous minor changes in the bric-a-brac of the room, which gratuitous labor considerably imperiled its identity.

"Please step this way," called Lieb, in full control of his faculties, "while we decide upon a background. I suppose you have already settled the more difficult question of pose and toilet," he continued, venturing to join the inquiry with a glance into Lena's bright eyes for the first time.

"Aunt and I," replied Lena, somewhat to the annoyance of her elderly relative, "have exhausted all imaginable costumes, full and decolette, with the sole result of demonstrating incompatibility of tastes. We compromised by agreeing to let you determine the momentous question for us," she concluded, sitting down composedly in a large easy chair, and looking at the artist confidently

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as though she expected him to dissipate all existing troubles at a moment's notice.

"I shall find my responsibilities sufficiently heavy," he laughed, "in doing justice to the subject, without increasing them at the risk of her displeasure," giving the lady a very suggestive look of admiration, that brought a slight flush to the cheeks of the young candidate.

"Oh, no; we are wholly dependent. My venerable aunty and I have agreed to disagree to the end. So there is no help for it. You must deliver us from the wilderness," declared Lena, with the austerity of a judicial decision.

"Her head is full of caprice. I warn you," asserted her aunt, irritably, "more than your profession is at stake," she proceeded, "if you undertake to confine her to any one position, or reconcile her contradictions."

These two women never did get along together. One was soda and the other acid, and whenever they mixed there was chemical action.

"Oh, Mr. Lieb, believe me! My good aunty is a great traducer," protested Lena, going so near to the painter that the light fabric of her skirts frisked against his feet. Just think, I offered to make every concession for the sake of peace and harmony. I even was so gracious as to consent to be placed on canvas with the same background, identical pose and dress that my

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charming aunty chose for herself in a painting by Muller, and would you believe, my aunt declared it preposterous for one so frivolous and tempestuous to be classified in such quiet surroundings, whereupon dear aunty nearly fainted as I assured her I would be so obliging as to be painted in a storm, a real cyclone, with the wind blowing hurricanes."

"Oh, you incorrigible child!" exclaimed the elderly lady with a painful vision of Lena's storm pose and startling attitudes fresh in mind.

"I just wish you would paint me in 'Renaissance,' holding the torch," declared Lena, sweetly.

"Mercy! The torch of reason!" ejaculated the aunt, horrified. "What a travesty!"

"Will you permit me to paint your portrait as I choose?" inquired the artist, looking at Lena, evidently having reconsidered the subject and willing to assume all responsibilities.

"What say you, aunty dear, yes or no?"

"I do not doubt——" commenced that lady diplomatically.

"Yes or no?" demanded Lena.

Balzac it is, who says, "A woman will say 'no' in just two letters, and 'yes' in nine hundred and ninety-nine different ways." At any rate it was beyond the question to get an affirmative to the proposition from the lady indicated, until she had been carefully informed of every detail and cere-

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mony. This took time, but when fully related, she, as well as Lena, was perfectly delighted with the plans and specifications, as it were.

Artist Lieb worked with soul and brain intent upon the execution of the commission, with which he was intrusted. Lena came daily, chaperoned by her elderly aunt, and sat for an hour. Every day the artist drank deeper of that intoxicating vintage.

Gradually she began to see herself stepping from concealed labyrinths of chrome into life size upon the canvas. The artist worked as though possessed. The painting was as faithful as the reflection of a mirror. The work progressed for three short happy weeks. One hour each day, Michael Lieb was in Paradise; the remaining twenty-three hours were purgatory. He was hopelessly and irretrievably enamoured of his fair patron. The expression "Seventh Heaven" is not always an extravagant and figurative one as applied to mortals. The phrase is far from being a hyperbole.

How many times during these weeks the two had talked of Edward Reynolds. Lieb, with refreshing candor, had kept nothing in reserve. Lena had listened to his benefactor's praise with undisguised appreciation. With womanly tact, when the subject was changed, she would lead the conversation back. Reynolds seemed to him a way

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to her favor, and he accepted the convenience as a means to the end of winning her preference. The "charming aunty" was a model chaperon. With her crocheting, for which she entertained a mania, sitting decorously in an adjoining room, she was as oblivious as a sphinx of the progress the artist and Lena were making on either of the roads of love or art.

Lena was late one day. The artist was tormented with a hundred and one disquieting thoughts. Was she ill? he asked himself. Perhaps displeased with something he had said; no, that could not be, because he had at all times been discreet and guarded. Maybe the painting was at fault. Again, yesterday he had held her arm, studying its graceful rotundity. Had he offended her?

Ah. That was her step. His heart gave a bound of joy—no—yes. He ran to the reception room, but stopped abruptly as the door opened and Lena Rivers entered.

"Good God! What is it, Lena?" he cried, looking at the woman whose portrait he was painting. "Lena," springing to her side and forgetting his habitual reserve, "why are you so white and your great eyes staring at me so? Speak, Lena, you are torturing me!"

"He is dying," she cried. "In mercy's name, save him. Oh!" she exclaimed, wringing her

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hands, hysterically, "why do you stand there? I tell you he is dying; your benefactor is dying. Oh! I shall go mad! Why do you tremble and turn to marble? I thought men act, when they love," she moaned, "dying—dying! **My** love! my love!"

Like a bolt from heaven, the truth had crushed into the brain of the artist. Michael Lieb swayed backward and forward, his long slender fingers clutching his throat, and with an expression of agony depicted in every feature, he gave a shriek such as mortal ear never heard and fell at full length upon the floor at her feet. Michael Lieb was conveyed to his mother's home a raving maniac.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

Queen Victoria's life is entwined in a thousand gracious acts that will never be recorded in the annals of history. An evening in June, 1861, England's fair Sovereign was seated in her carriage near the railway station of the London, Chatham and Dover line.

Thronging the central depot were some two thousand young men and boys, young women and girls. It was evident that the unusual numbers were not met by chance or accident. To the evident delight of all, the whistle of the engine was heard at no great distance. The look of happy expectation upon the faces of the hundreds of young people changed to one of animation, as the long line of coaches finally rolled up and stopped. A stream of passengers began to alight. The young people, of whom mention is made, remained together, while looks and even murmurs of disappointment were beginning to be seen and heard among them. At this time someone shouted, "There he is!" The next moment a loud acclamation burst forth. Edward Reynolds, the cause of this commotion, did not look upon the scene unmoved. There were young men and women

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mixed in that great crowd of welcomers, who had traveled hundreds of miles upon brief leaves of absence, in order to be present at the homecoming of their saviour. Reynolds had received no intimation of the demonstration. His feet had no sooner touched the platform, than he was surrounded by the eager, enthusiastic, frantic legion of young people, each envious of the other in the first handshaking and greeting.

"Make way there!" cried a member of the Queen's bodyguard, stepping forward as the crowd separated, to deliver her Majesty's message.

"The Queen wishes a moment's interview. She waits yonder in her carriage. I will conduct you to her presence."

Reynolds followed the messenger and bowed low before the august but womanly Sovereign.

"I come with these young people to welcome your arrival, and offer my carriage to convey you home," said the Queen, extending her hand.

"England's illustrious Queen," replied Reynolds, bowing lowly over the royal hand, "has shown me an honor, the memory of which shall be cherished. But I am to these young people what your most gracious Majesty is to her millions of loyal subjects. Your gracious Majesty will suffer me to return to my boys and girls."

"A man of a million," remarked England's

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Queen, as she was driven away after having seen the American conducted back to the hilarious young folk, who gave their idol another cheer upon seeing him part with the Queen to rejoin them.

Their king had come back. The king of humanity had returned from Death's door! It was an hour of enthusiasm and rejoicing. Even the rugged face of old Hardsides was seen moving among the motley crowd, tears moistening his eyes. It was more than a conqueror's triumphant return. Gratitude, affection, veneration, love prompted those grateful hearts to crowd about their hero.

"My boys and girls," said Reynolds, good naturedly, exhausted by an hour of hand shaking, "we are forgetting I am not strong, and, perhaps, if I am excused to get a little rest, you will not be angry."

"Reynolds is not strong, we will bother him no more to-day—make way! Where is Lord Howe and his carriage?"

The carriage of Lord Howe was in attendance. Within were seated the old nobleman, who had been an interested spectator of the novel scene, accompanied by his friend Rivers and the latter's daughter.

There was another spectator to that scene. A fair, beautiful woman was crouching against the

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column supporting the roof of the depot. She was in the very outskirts of the multitude, still nothing had escaped her bright vigilant eyes. From first to last, she had stood as motionless as a statue. She comprehended the action of the Queen, the infinite and excessive joy of the youth, the pleased surprise of the wanderer. Oh, if she could only rush forward, too, and feel the mesmeric touch of those gentle hands, and hear the benediction of that voice. At last she saw Edward Reynolds lifted into the carriage. She had not noticed the conveyance before, and she looked blankly into the faces of the occupants. Lord Howe, grand old man, his face beaming with happiness, and a stranger? Yes—no—she had seen that face before. Ah! Yes, she remembered now. She was walking the streets of London, the Duke of Berwick at her side. But there was a fourth then. A fair, fresh face, even to girlishness. Ah, God, a sharp stinging pain, like the point of a poniard, pricked through her heart—Alice Eldridge recognized the woman that had darted past her to the side of Edward Reynolds in the Art Gallery of London.

The carriage rolled away. Then the figure at the pillar moved and looked about in a dazed way, as though to find her bearings.

“America! Dear old America!” she whispered, her gaze fixed upon the western sky. “Thank

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God! To-morrow I shall feel the waves of the ocean rolling beneath me. The ocean that separates us forever and forever! He in England—I in America! Oh, I am tired and homesick.”

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CHAPTER XXVII.

While yet in Switzerland, Edward Reynolds had notified his legal advisors to realize money upon all American securities which he possessed. All pacific measures having failed, war was inevitable between the North and South.

It was a singular coincidence that these securities should have been converted into cash upon the day of his arrival in London. He had been represented in the matter by a young barrister, who had formerly had an acquaintance with the night school. The lawyer had received the money after banking hours, and, unwilling to assume the responsibility of guarding the treasure, had sought the owner for instructions. "Bring it here," Reynolds had advised him.

It was during the afternoon of the first day of Reynolds' return to London that he listened to the particulars of poor Lieb's great affliction. Edward had been informed that Lieb was ill, but did not know of the serious character of his illness. But, to be told that overwork and the unprecedented success had undermined the reason of the young genius, was a blow that nearly prostrated him. Reynolds' grief was inconsolable. He

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could not accept the decree as final. It was evening before he managed to visit the artist. He could not rest for a sense of guilty neglect, if he did not call to see his unfortunate friend. Of the hundreds he had helped, Leib was his favorite. The old mother of the artist met Reynolds at the door, and, upon recognizing her visitor, gave way to a torrent of tears.

"Do not weep, my good woman," said Reynolds, reassuringly, putting an arm kindly around the trembling mother, "I am here and we will have him all right again directly."

"Oh, my poor boy," she sobbed, "there is no help. They are going to take him to the asylum to-morrow, where his father is confined," she moaned piteously.

"Calm yourself, and trust to me," said Reynolds.

As he entered the room where the artist was confined, Lieb raised himself on one elbow and stared at Reynolds. There is an unwritten language in men's eyes at times that reads as plainly as printed words, "Stand back." For the life of Edward Reynolds he could not have explained why he stopped at the center of the room, midway between the door and the bed, fascinated by the detestation, hate, horror, the burning, loathing, and abhorrence gleaming in those dilated orbs. Reynolds was no sooner aware of the feeling than he

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was ashamed of the weakness, and approaching the bedside, took the damp clammy hand of the artist, saying kindly, "Lieb, don't you know me? I have come back to you."

"Yes," the compressed lips faltered, while great beads of perspiration collected upon the forehead, under the eyes and about the mouth, all the more noticeable because of the bloodless face. "Yes, yes, I know you, I never shall forget—you!"

There was no responsive pressure of the fingers which Reynolds clasped, while the other hand of the artist was moving furtively over the counterpane, the fingers clutching spasmodically the folds of the spread.

The drops of perspiration united and trickled down the painter's face.

"You must hurry and get well," said Reynolds, trying bravely to conceal his emotion. "Miss Rivers tells me that she is impatient for her portrait, and is anxious for your early recovery. She misses the visits to the studio."

"You have seen her and talked with her?" inquired Lieb, his voice shaking and husky. The lips of the artist moved as he spoke, but the sound seemed to proceed from another direction, while the fingers stole to the wrist of Reynolds and were closing and opening fitfully.

"I believe," said the burly attendant, "I'll step

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across the way and get a mug of beer while you are sitting here, if you have no objections."

As the door closed upon the retreating form, the artist turned upon his side, freeing his limbs of all impediments save the edge of the coverlets. There was nothing in the action to excite suspicion. It was the natural desire to shift position, consequent to illness; but, despite it all, Reynolds was oppressed by a sense of dread, a premonition of evil. He attributed his anxiety to the nervousness of a weakened physical state. He was not strong yet, and found himself regretting that the attendant had been permitted to withdraw, and was speculating upon the probable duration of his absence.

There is something so weird and supernatural in the fixed and changeless stare of a person, to say nothing of that of a madman, that the object of espionage invariably shows disquiet and irritation. Reynolds felt that a voice would be some company, even if it were his own, and spoke as much to exorcise the dark foreboding from his spirit as anything else.

"I shall bring Miss Rivers to see you, if you like." The words sounded remote, recoiling upon themselves, or off at a distance like ventriloquism.

"Parade the love you have stolen from me!" hissed the artist, springing from the bed and

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grappling with Reynolds, who was dazed by the rapidity and impetuosity of the attack.

"Never! Never!" shrieked the artist, forcing his unwilling antagonist backward.

Reynolds realized that he was in the embrace of a madman, possessed of the strength of a dozen men, and braced himself for the encounter. He had not the heart, if it were in his power, to inflict corporal injury upon the demented artist; but at the same time he was resolved upon suffering as little personal damage as possible. With a sudden movement, he shook the madman from him and springing with the agility of a cat, placed a large center table between them.

"Ha! Ha! You think to escape my vengeance," shouted the artist, surveying the feeble impediment that gave momentary resistance to his murderous rage.

"Lieb," panted Reynolds, looking steadily into the blazing eyes, "I command you to stop."

A wild animal may be vanquished by fixed and constant gaze, not so a wild man.

"'Command'!" the artist repeated, his features working convulsively. "Perjurer! Thief! Your dominion has ceased! Oh, fair dark fiend, you have robbed me of Lena's love. Her words are ever ringing in my ears, like sleepless cathedral bells. Why did you not die? Live to cheat me, eh? Ha! Ha! Will she love you when I have

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torn that false sallow face; rended that white throat and gouged out those treacherous eyes?"

With a demoniacal yell, he scaled the barrier between them, as easily as a panther might have leaped, and clutched his benefactor. With unerring precision, the maniac had gripped the throat of Reynolds and clung with the tenacity of a vise. This way and that way they surged, overturning the center table and furniture. Reynolds was at a disadvantage, clutching at the bare skin of the madman, whose muscles were as compact as steel bars. He tried to release the talons sinking deeper into his neck. He ran about the room, the bloodhound clinging to his throat. He beat the demon in the face.

"Ha! Ha! Who's master now?" laughed Lieb.

Reynolds was suffocating. He hurled his assailant upon the bed, dragged him to the floor, rolled upon him, over him, but the madman was ever dangling at his throat. He tried to pry away the forceps of steel. His strength was failing him; his eyes were bloodshot; his brain splitting. Good God! It was strangulation—death! With superhuman strength, born of love of life, he tore at the fingers of iron, twisting deeper and deeper into his neck, throwing himself backward, forward, sideways, bearing the palpitating, clinging, sinister human cobra depending from his neck. There is surplus energy in the last despairing cast for

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life. For one instant, with the surcharged blood bursting from his nostrils and spattering over the naked figure of his would-be assassin, he gazed into the merciless, murderous eyes. The face of the madman was dancing everywhere. He was hydra-headed, argus-eyed. Reynolds staggered and reeled unsteadily upon his feet, when, drawing back his clenched fist, he shot it outward into the faces that were legion, falling forward unconscious. Side by side Reynolds and Leib lay upon the floor, the awful illumination of insanity blazing in the eyes of the artist, who was watching with fiendish exultation, the purple face so close to his own, with those fingers still clinging remorselessly at the other's throat. At this critical juncture the door opened, and the attendant stepped into the room. The next moment he crossed the floor and was dragging the artist from the inanimate victim of the latter's fury. With all his prodigious strength, he pushed his big fingers between those of the artist and Reynolds' neck.

"Stop!" howled the madman, as he became aware of the purpose of the attendant. "Desist! Hell!" he hissed, his bare legs twisting and writhing like those of a contortionist around the body of Reynolds. "Damnation! I'll murder you!" He shrieked, doubling up like a cat, resisting with the strength inspired by homicidal mania the

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fingers wedging under his own. "Perdition! Release my hands! Oh! Oh! O—" he yelled in impotent rage, as the attendant Hercules pried open his fingers, and the neck of the victim slipped from the deadly grasp.

The attendant bore the crazed artist and hurled him upon the bed. Exhaustion, often prostration, follows excessive exertion. The artist lay still, breathing with difficulty. An ambulance was summoned, and Reynolds was carried to a hospital, where his swollen, bleeding neck received proper attention, afterward being conveyed, at his request, to his own home. The horrors of that night were to cling like a hideous nightmare to the memory of Edward Reynolds. The words of the mad artist in reference to Miss Rivers were sounding in his ears. He understood it all. Reason had revolted, and the rich mind of the artist had perished upon the fires kindled at the altar of love. Love! The destroyer of his life's peace and happiness. Love! That had dethroned the reason of the friend whom he cherished most of all. Love! And he, unwittingly, as God was his judge, had brought another fair young life under the shadow of that curse. No! One life should be made happy. He would repair to his utmost by gentleness and kindness the injury he had done her, at least.

Lena was good and beautiful. There were

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harder fates for better men. It is so easy to resolve.

Despite the administration of powerful narcotics, Reynolds could not sleep. He would no sooner close his eyes than the awful scene, like a hideous phantasmagoria, was conjured up in his brain and re-enacted. He had a horror of falling into a doze and persuaded the young advocate, who had insisted upon remaining during the night, to lie down, while he got up and dressed. Seating himself in a large rocking-chair near a partly open window, Reynolds found the change preferable to the visions of the bed; besides, the pain in his swollen neck was greatly relieved by a sitting posture. Hour after hour, he sat rocking, to and fro, with thoughts like unto firebrands singeing and torturing him. He even envied Lieb the loss of his faculties. He felt it must be a relief to go mad. He heard the clock strike one—two—three. At last a sense of drowsiness stole upon him. He pinched himself in order to keep awake. He feared the nightmare of sleep even more than the broodings of wakefulness. But, despite it all, the head nodded, the eyes finally closed, and he fell asleep. How long he slept he never knew. He dreamed he was suffocating again; that he could not breathe. It seemed to the slumberer that there was great confusion; bells were ringing and people shouting on the

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streets. Something was pounding the pavement like the roar and vibration of chariot racing.

It was the fire engines thundering over the flinty streets.

“Fire! fire!”

No man could sleep with such a din in the neighborhood. Reynolds opened his eyes to peer into a chamber dense with smoke, while the crackling of a vast conflagration was deafening. He tried to move, but the numbness of his limbs filled him with terror. He realized that the stupor was produced by inhaling the dense smoke. With heroic effort, he rose from the chair, and going to the bed upon which his companion was lying, tried to awaken him, the heavy respiration of the barrister, showing advanced stages of asphyxiation. Reynolds was himself again. He rushed to the door, which he had taken the precaution to lock, owing to the treasure in the room and opening it, a sheet of flame darted at him. He swung it to with a bang and crossed to a door leading into another chamber from which he thought to escape. Here, also, communication was shut off. He ran to the window and raised the sash. Below and above fire was bursting from every opening. The intrepid firemen upon the street caught sight of Reynolds at the window. A ladder was hastily raised to the third story; but the fiery elements burned these avenues of escape to charred crisps,

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before the top rung was in reach of the imprisoned man. Away at the left, some forty feet, at an angle of the building, the ravage caused by the flame was not so great, and, consequently, the heat less intense. If he could reach that point, ladders might be raised and he should escape. Directly under the window, easy of access, ran a cornice a foot wide with a steep slope. He might step upon it and walk cautiously to the haven of safety. The feat was full of peril, but it was the last lingering chance of life. He ran back to the bed.

"Wake up," he shouted in the ears of the sleeper, "the building is in flames—we shall perish." He shook the man violently, meeting with no response. Whatever was done had to be done quickly. He stooped and tugged at an iron chest beneath the bed. A million and a half dollars in securities and gold were locked in that iron vault. He thought to hurl it from the window, but it would have taken the combined strength of four men to carry it; then he turned suddenly to the bed again and, lifting the limp form of the barrister in his arms, glided to the window. It was suicide to venture out upon that slender path. Those on the pavement sixty feet below, divining his purpose, shouted that he save himself. Edward Reynolds was not the man to abandon a comrade in peril. Slowly he lowered himself

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upon the cornice with the man lying across the sill. This done, he raised the still object in his arms, with their bodies inclining slightly in the window, then, with every muscle rigid and tense, he swung his burden carefully out and pushed it past the projection of the window frame. This accomplished, he balanced himself like a rope-walker and moved cautiously forward, while those upon the ground held their breath. The scene to those breathless spectators was that of a man walking in space bearing a burden in his arms. The trained firemen understood. To them one glance was sufficient. The odds were against that brave fellow, but if he reached his destination he should be saved. Up went a ladder, and a second one, while fearless firemen mounted to an elevation horizontal to that of the battler for life. Reynolds realized what had been done and crept along slowly, hugging the building. His hands and face were blistered by the appalling heat, still he moved steadily forward. One misstep was instant destruction. On the other hand, there was menace in the forced deliberation of his movements. The unconscious man was liable to revive at any moment, and that meant certain death. The false lifting of an arm's weight over that yawning chasm would lose their balance and precipitate them to the pavement below. Ten feet more to traverse; but, within that distance, the flames

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were freshly bursting from a window. A grapple had been fastened to a window jamb with a rope secured to an iron hook, while the fireman next the creeping man had snapped the other end of the rope to his belt and stepping upon the cornice advanced cautiously to the window, from which the tongues of flame were darting forth, to offer any aid in his power to the apparently doomed man. Edward Reynolds had made the perilous passage, to be confronted at the very moment of safety with a new and insurmountable danger. He and the firemen were separated by a fiery furnace.

"Push the man ahead. Don't lose your balance. If I can catch his arm I'll save him. Stay where you are," directed the fireman, "and you can be saved in the same way."

"Move back!" came the answer from the other side of the blazing window; "I am coming through."

Below, thousands of people saw the man entering the awful caldron of flame, and held their breath in suspense. Great God! Where was he? The smoke and flame enveloped him. Had he fallen within the window and perished? Some women screamed; others fainted; the cheeks of strong men blanched; the watchers lowered their eyes or turned away their gaze from the human holocaust. No one spoke; no one seemed to

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breathe. The very atmosphere was charged with apprehension.

"Look!" cried a voice. "He lives! He has passed!"

The diverted eyes again sought the place. Emerging from the smoke and flame, groping his way forward like a blind man, inch by inch, their garments in flames, was the man and his burden.

"I have him," exclaimed the fireman. "Let go," he continued, and the next moment the fearless fireman shot to the pavement, according to a secret process of ladder descent firemen alone possess, grasping the barrister.

Reynolds had been relieved of his unconscious weight. He was faint and dazed. The pain caused by his burning garments, and the frightful blisters upon his face, neck, and hands were excruciating, intolerable. The tall spires and steeples were revolving and whirling before his vision, while the rush and roar in his head was the collision of worlds. He fought against the illusion. To yield to the new foe, he realized, was certain death. A few feet more; a half-dozen careful steps, and he should live. With a superhuman effort he shook the weakness from him. Salvation was at his finger-tips.

Life! How mighty and infinite the unnumbered thousands of invisible chains binding us to life! Men are known to be calm and intrepid at

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moments of supreme peril. At such times they will reckon with the nicety of a mathematician, calculate with the accuracy of a civil engineer, comprehend, by some governing law of their nature—instinct—self-preservation—whatever it is, that which at moments of personal safety and security is absolutely unintelligible. There are lofty minds, cool, imperturbable natures, that rise like an emanation of kinship with God at times of trial and affliction.

Reynolds' nerves of iron had stood him in good stead. Fumes of the burning flesh of his own body were drawn into his dilated nostrils.

Suddenly above the roar and confusion of conflagration rang forth the hideous, mirthless, inhuman laughter of the insane.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ashes! Ashes! Black, smoldering ashes! An ash heap! Ha! Ha!—of the magician's infernal college! He, the devil that feeds our bodies to starve our souls!"

That demoniacal voice, between a shriek and a whisper, paralyzed the limbs of Edward Reynolds. Whence proceeded the sound? Where was the madman?

"Lieb!" shouted Reynolds, turning his face upward and gazing upon the awful apparition, with the life currents congealing in his veins. There, far above, beyond human help or reach, on the very topmost tower, was the demented painter,

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still clinging to the fatal torch with which he had rushed from room to room, from story to story, igniting all combustible and inflammable material with the fiendish mania of incendiarism.

"The torch of reason lighting the world!" shrieked the artist, waving the blazing fagots above his head in long, spectral, sweeping flourishes. "Even as the blackness of night, this dark mask of gloom resting upon the world," he howled, brandishing the beacon high above his head, "is penetrated by the glare of the devil's burning rookery. Ha! Ha! See the lurid——"

"Lieb!" shouted Reynolds, raising a hand as though to save him. "Oh, God, is it an hallucination—a spectre?"

"Hark! Who calls Lieb?" demanded the maniac, peering over the walls of the tower, his gaze resting upon the upturned face. "Not dead?" he yelled, his features working convulsively at recognition. "Not dead?—Who'll save thee now?" he hissed, swinging his form upon the edge of the tower and preparing to spring. As Reynolds became aware of the deadly purpose, he closed his eyes. The next instant a dark object, clutching at everything within reach, shot downward, crashing into one of the ladders, which also crumbled and fell. Darkness was swimming in Reynolds' eyes. He believed he was dying—sinking—fall-

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ing. There was numbness—anæsthesia—freedom—a sense of bliss—joy—rapture—oblivion.

In less than thirty seconds the second fireman had reached the pavement, with an unconscious object in his arms, while a hoarse, tumultuous shout and acclamation from a thousand throats greeted the brave exploit.

Two months later, passing the doors of the hospital, and entering the streets of London, no one would have recognized in the scarred and disfigured face the classic countenance of Edward Reynolds.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

"No, my lord, it is of no use. I should hardly know how to preside over an institution dependent upon an endowment of state," said Edward Reynolds.

"But you are left perfectly free to act as you see fit," insisted his lordship; "confidence in you is unbounded."

"Yes, I know," said Reynolds; "still, I simply cannot accept the position. The work is congenial, the salary all that can be asked; but, my lord, I should be found wanting. I have done things in my own way so long, you see, that habit is formed. A board of directors would hardly suspend criticism upon some of my expenditures, if what I have done in the past with my own means were to be repeated."

"We will suppress adverse comment," continued Lord Howe, in his impulsive way. "'A tree is known by its fruits'."

"But a tree needs constant watching and pruning," insisted Edward.

"May I inquire what you propose doing?" asked the nobleman.

"Certainly," replied the younger man, "if there

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is one in the wide world entitled to make that inquiry it is your lordship. First, let me review a moment. The state has already provided for my boys and girls, with competent instructors at the head of the proposed institution. Hardsides is a noble old soul, and thoroughly interested in the work. He is more tractable than I should be to outside interference. In addition, the church will be reconciled to his supremacy. There are certain ministers who think that the destruction of the home of my children was because of Divine displeasure. I have heard it intimated that the fire and my painful injuries are the visitation of God's wrath, incurred because I preached to those children without ordination. Thus, there have been conflict and friction."

"The vaporings of mediocrity," burst in his lordship.

"Be that as it may, there have been, nevertheless, constant impediments placed in my way. I could tell you of innumerable instances where contracts for employment have been cancelled because of this influence. True, I have borne with it in silence. My fortune alone was involved. I sought other situations, always triumphing in the end. Oh, the intolerance of the church! But the spirit of charity and love shall eventually receive and dedicate each and every act done in the service of Christian fellowship, however humble

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and unworthy the instrumentality. It is so hard for the church to acknowledge that good can be done other than by the church itself. In the worst person living there is some good; enough, perhaps, to be shaped into a cross, where the multitude of his sins are expiated. How can man, confined within bounds and limitations, presume to place interpretation on the conscience of the infinite God? I am not better in that I have been condemned; nor am I worse. I would and do excuse the persecution; but it seems incredible that men should construe the loss of my fortune and the very scars upon my face as an argument that nothing can prosper in the glorification of God without the sanction of the church."

"They are confounded," declared his lordship. "It is acknowledged upon all hands that had it not been for the wholesome lessons you have taught, the splendid efforts being made at this very moment would never have been put forth."

"Well, at any rate, I can retire from a field, where my services can be dispensed with so easily, without regret. All is being done possible to do. The ægis of kindness and protection will hover over the tender years of unfortunate children. There will be greater unity between government protection and the church. My work in England has terminated. In my own beloved country the fangs of discord and strife are rending the fair

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Columbia. Separation and disunion threaten the preservation of the Republic. Both North and South believe themselves right. At this distance, I am able to see much to justify the South. But no principle, however ably advocated, can avail against the life of the Republic. There will be carnage, devastation, ruin of the wealth of nations; but at the end, after millions of lives shall have been sacrificed, after untold treasure shall be spent, 'ONE AND INSEPARABLE' shall be written in letters of fire before the gaze of the world. President Lincoln has called for 200,000 volunteers——"

"Stop!" exclaimed his lordship. "You cannot think of the life of a private soldier!"

"I do not 'think'," replied Reynolds, "I am resolved. Without a moment's delay I shall enter the rolls of my countrymen in the cause of freedom, in the struggle for the preservation and perpetuity of the Republic."

"You have so many in America to do all you can do in the ranks, and we so few to continue the work you alone began," argued Lord Howe.

"You have a treasure in Hardsides. I should have kept him with me had matters remained as they were. He will not disappoint you."

"Well, a man is happier in doing that which he believes to be his duty. I would not dissuade you, if I could. However, I regret you are not

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able to see your obligations here. Halloo! I believe there is Rivers and his daughter. I was not expecting them, but they are none the less welcome," declared his lordship, excusing himself and going to greet his guests.

As he withdrew from the room, Edward Reynolds rose and walked before a large mirror, standing some moments in front of the glass.

"Well, fate has decided this matter for us," he muttered. "Under no circumstances will I permit that lovely creature, even if she should now so desire, to be encumbered with my life and poverty. There is a brighter fate in store for her."

The approach of footsteps warned him from his attitude. Scarcely had he stepped aside, when the door opened and the nobleman, accompanied by his guests, entered. It was the first meeting between Lena and Edward since the fire and his injuries. Despite himself, Edward felt a measure of embarrassment.

"I am glad to see you so far convalescent as to be about again," said Mr. Rivers, heartily shaking hands.

"Thank you," said Reynolds. Lena was a step behind her father. "And Miss Rivers, I trust, shares the sentiment of her father," said Edward, taking the extended hand.

"Indeed she does," replied Lena, fervently, meeting the steady gaze. She had darted one

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swift glance at the neck and left cheek, then, with a strange light in her eyes, they rested upon those of the man. To her that face was never so beautiful, so noble.

"We come down to bid farewell," said her father; "we go to pass a couple of months with relatives in Lancashire." Had he seen, also, the light shining in his child's soul? Reynolds guessed the reason of his departure.

"My friends are all deserting me," said his lordship; "Mr. Reynolds starts for America directly."

"For America!" repeated Lena, her hand pressing against her neck where throat and bosom meet. Then she stooped, and, lifting a cluster of house flowers, pretended to admire them.

"Come, go with us," said Rivers, addressing his lordship; "I promise you a capital time."

"There are people who forget that I am no longer a boy," laughed his lordship.

"Well, if Mr. Reynolds goes to America, you will find time dragging heavily," admonished Mr. Rivers.

"I have been gallivanting around of late more than one of my years is supposed to do. But," he added, "was ever a man so rewarded?" patting his grandson on the shoulder with one hand and motioning toward Reynolds with the other.

"By the way," inquired Rivers, "have you seen the article in the *Times* this morning?" The ar-

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ticle mentioned was an acrimonious attack upon the political opinions favored by the two gentlemen.

"No. Does it do us justice?"

"Ample, it seems, from the standpoint of the opposition," replied Rivers. The two old gentlemen walked to a distant window in order to read and discuss the strictures published upon them, leaving Lena and Edward, who had recovered somewhat from the awkwardness of their position, by themselves.

"You must feel quite lonesome without your young people to look after," said Lena, dropping the rose foliage she had been holding.

"Yes, I miss the youngsters. Children are torments, always will be, for that matter; but they grow in our affections, especially if the relation of dependency exists."

"Papa tells me that Parliament has taken decisive measures in behalf of the children you have protected."

"Indeed, poor Lieb did me a greater service than he knew, upon severing my connection in the care of the little ones."

"I should think you would regret to leave them in order to go to America," said Lena, stooping to pick a withered petal from a flower.

"I regret more the necessity that compels my return."

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"I do not quite catch your meaning," replied Lena.

"The war between the States," he replied.

"What a horrible thing war is!" shuddered Lena.

"Indeed it is, at best. But civil war! Father arrayed against son; brother pitted against brother. The South hopeful of dismembering the Union; the North determined to preserve the sisterhood. I had thought never to go back to America."

"Will you return to England when hostilities cease?" asked Lena.

"Yes, if I live."

"'If you live?'" repeated Lena, her voice trembling. "Do you intend joining the army? Have you had military training?"

"Soldiers are drilled before being placed under the fire of active service," explained Reynolds.

"But the life of a private soldier—the exposure and privation," pointed out Lena.

"But generals, alone, do not fight battles. Soldiers are needed to win victories. Already the call for help has gone forth. Two hundred thousand of my countrymen are asked to volunteer, and, as I see my duty, it lies there."

"But the war will not last long. Surely the South will yield submission," insisted Lena.

"Ah, Miss Rivers, there's where the trouble lies.

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The South does not know what the word 'submission' means. There are no more brave and chivalrous people than the Southerners. It will be a war of extermination. They believe their rights have been invaded. From infancy they have been taught to regard the institution of slavery as Mosaic law, and they know, as well as the people of the North, that either slavery or the Republic must end. Both cannot dwell in the same household. The South has been educated to believe that sovereign allegiance is due the state; the North that sovereign allegiance is due the Union."

"But papa thinks the war will not last longer than a year."

"A year?" replied Reynolds. "Please God, your father may be right. But years shall come and go before the end of this unholy strife. Millions of lives shall be offered, a country shall be laid waste, the North or the South shall be crushed, before a cessation of hostilities. I know the spirit of my countrymen. They surrender their lives without a murmur in a cause considered just. But laying down and surrendering arms, abandoning the struggle—never! The last thousand men of the South, able to bear arms, will be found stubbornly dying at their post, gaunt with hunger, burning with thirst, barefoot and in rags."

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"Don't go to the States," said Lena, in a low, pleading voice.

"What is left me here? My fortune has been swept away. Out of a million and a half, less than \$30,000 in gold were found melted in a corner of the iron chest; and maimed and scarred——"

He stopped suddenly, ashamed to be heard complaining; or, arrested by the light flashing in the woman's eyes.

"Make another fortune. You can do it. You can do anything. The West Indies, Brazil, South America, lie before you; but, fortune or no fortune, never speak of those scars in that way again. Remember how you received them."

Lena Rivers was a woman of the world, with few rivals more beautiful of face or graceful of form. Her life had been one long round of pleasure. Wealth, riches, the life of ease and elegance, were indispensable to her happiness. To have resigned her envied position would have taken from her life its chief adornment. She could cheerfully have waited a quarter of a century in order for the man she loved to make a fortune. But she would as soon have thought of renouncing life as to marry unless that marriage meant a continuation of the life she had lived. Luxury, splendor, and display were as essential to her being as the glittering jewel of a crown to a sovereign.

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The poverty of a few paltry thousands was profanation. By education and environment—the education and environment, alas, of many an Anglo-Saxon aristocratic daughter—the heart had been taught, as deeply as the heart can receive instruction, that the great desideratum, the grand achievement of life, is the parade of boundless wealth. Lena, all over this great world, if thou couldst but look into the lusterless, void lives of thy fated prototypes, thou wouldst not be gathering these priceless pearls of the soul to cast them with those beautiful hands beneath trampling feet.

Follow those wretched creatures to their majestic, loveless homes. Go with them to their chambers, smothered in costliest tapestry, embossed in silver and gold, and read the pity of it all—the cost of it all—in the whitening faces and trembling hands, as jewels without price are torn from snow-white, swan-fashioned throats and cast upon the floor, when the master's footstep falls at the threshold of that door. Oh, it were well, if the hearts of slaves were purchased with their fair bodies at the millionaire auction blocks!

“Make another fortune. You can do it. You can do anything. The West Indies, Brazil, South America!”

How many a cry has gone out to man from woman's bleeding heart! “Make a fortune.

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Save me from myself. There is Brazil, South America, the West Indies! Go, but return to me rich!"

Alas! how many a man has dashed into those paths, blazoned with skulls and skeletons, in quest of that mythical Eldorado, without other chart and compass than a woman's command: "Go, but return to me rich!"

Lena Rivers' heart was both true and false: true to the lap of luxury in which she was reclining; false to the fair priestess of the soul, ever pleading for the larger life—the sweeter, dearer life of truest womanhood.

Edward Reynolds was contemplating in his mind's eye two women: Alice and Lena, one, faithless, and the other—well, it made no difference particularly. Still, he had felt for these women sentiments of love and respect. Between those two women, he should have chosen his companion for life. They were both beautiful, both gifted. Yet one was faithless, and the other——. Well, how does woman love? She seems sincere. A woman will blush and tremble and blush in acknowledging captivity. The loves of woman are as so many intoxications. Men, to women, are as the various vintages of wine: port, sherry, champagne, Bordeaux, the kind producing the least headache and annoyance having final preference. The more beautiful woman may be, the better ex-

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pert she becomes in choice beverages. In the main, women are pretty much alike. A woman's beauty is her weapon. She instinctively understands its several uses and employments. Man, in the clumsiness of his strength, is no match for woman in the security and charm of her weakness. A man's knowledge of woman equals his understanding of electricity, gravitation, and a few other recondite mysteries. A woman's knowledge of man is secretive, intuitive, infinite. By a flash of an eye she can translate man to the transports of heaven, and pierce every secret of his inmost thoughts. The more we study and know of woman, the greater our admiration of her power; and, despite it all, the more indispensable she becomes to our happiness.

Oh! The possibilities of Brazil, West Indies, South America! Alice and Lena! He would close the portals of his heart against womankind. Brazil, West Indies, South America! Recover the fortune he had lost! Replace the thousands wiped out by conflagration.

"If I survive the war," he at last replied, slowly measuring his words, "I will make another fortune somehow—somewhere."

"Will you come to England then?" The words had rushed to her lips, fresh from the glow and warmth of the heart. Her voice, the warm perfume of her breath upon his cheek, and all the

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glory of womanhood fascinating him as by a spell.

"Yes, if I succeed. And you——"

"Oh," replied Lena, once more bending over the rose-bush and picking a bud, "I shall be here."

"Is the rambler dying," asked Mr. Rivers, coming forward, "that you two give it so much attention?"

"No, papa," laughed Lena, fully recovered; "see, it is in bud and blossoming," holding up to her father's view the pink bit of rose anatomy she had just plucked.

"In bud and blossoming," laughed Lord Howe, suggestively, rescuing the fragrant blossom from the fate of immediate destruction.

"Come, Lena, we have been beguiled already, and must make haste to answer for delay," looking steadily, if not inquisitively, at the happy face of his daughter, while giving orders that the carriage be brought to the door.

"By the way," explained Lord Howe, "I received a letter yesterday from the Duke of Berwick. He announces that he intends sailing directly for America, as special correspondent for the London *Times*."

"The Duke of Berwick!" exclaimed Lena. "There is a rumor that he is engaged to marry an American heiress. It is she with whom we saw the Duke walking the day of the sales, while driving from the Gallery upon the boulevard. Ah, yes, I

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remember, your competitor," she continued, turning to Edward. "I have seen her twice; once, on the streets, and again, under the roof at the railway station. It was the day of your return. She was an interested spectator of that singular scene. My! She is worth millions in her own right, so they say, besides being an only daughter of a rich banker. They are to be married in America."

"There is our carriage," interrupted her father. "Come, Miss Tardiness, get ready."

"In a moment, papa. Would you deprive me of the pleasure of gossip? Yes," she continued, "the Duke is much in love. He has abandoned all his bad habits and old associates, and has taken up a course of study with the view of entering politics. Every one predicts that we shall hear from him some day. Anyway, he is to be congratulated in winning such a beautiful and wealthy lady for the mistress of the Berwick estates."

"Come," repeated her father.

"Humph!" ejaculated Lord Howe. "You are more likely to be the Duchess of Berwick, than that American lady."

"I!" she exclaimed. "Good-bye, Lord Howe, papa is out of patience; and you," she said, extending her hand to Edward, "you—why, your hand is as cold as ice! Are you ill?"

"No, certainly not. What a fancy!"

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"Well, I am not going to say good-bye to you; it is only an *au revoir*." She was looking into a white face—white, she thought, because of that parting. "Years are as days, and days are as years, until we meet again," she whispered. "*Au revoir*."

"Good-bye," said Edward. "I will return to England." He was thinking, "They are to be married in America! I will come back rich as the richest. I have a sudden mania for money."

"Thank you." Her small, white, transparent fingers gave a pressure that thrilled the object of their touch. "I will be the first to welcome you." They walked to the side of her father, who was standing at the carriage. Edward took her hand and assisted her to the seat. Lena Rivers' heart was a battle-ground, where a fierce and bitter war was being waged between pride and love. She was seized with an irresistible impulse. She would not let him go! She would keep him forever beside her! Lena clung to his hand. She would exchange her reign of fashion for the kingdom of love! Some fiend whispered in her ear, "Thirty thousand! Thirty thousand!" Lena withdrew the fingers and turned her white face to the window. The horses plunged forward.

"Good-bye!" shouted Rivers.

"Good-bye," spoke Lord Howe and Edward simultaneously.

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There were tears upon a white face pressed against the window of the carriage.

Edward Reynolds watched the carriage until it was lost in the distance, while the names of two women were being repeated o'er and o'er: Alice and Lena! Alice and Lena! Despite himself, despite Lena's loveliness, he felt like some recidivist—guilty of twice permitting woman to enter his thoughts.

But life is cheerless without a fireside; and a fireside is cold and dreary without woman.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

The Duke of Berwick was considered one of the most authentic correspondents of the Civil War. The representative of several foreign papers, next to Longdeville, he was the most popular among officers and army. Heedless of risk and danger, he invariably made his way to those vantage-grounds where observation of the movements of the contending armies might be made with greatest accuracy of detail. He had been bronzed to the color of a nut during his four years of camp life, the last vestige of English airs having long since been lost to sight under army discipline. Englishmen are brave, and bravery is one of the strongest ties joining men in the inseparable bonds of a common brotherhood. The Duke of Berwick's previous visit to the States had been improvidently arranged for him, upon terms and conditions not entirely to his liking, and, consequently, was not as pleasant as it might have been under more agreeable circumstances. Whatever may have been the reason for his second visit, it was, at least, voluntary.

Deep in his heart he admitted he came to be near Alice Eldridge; ostensibly, it was as the cor-

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respondent of a number of European papers. Scarcely a month had elapsed, from the time he began his duties, that he had not seen and talked with Alice. She had been one of the first to volunteer her services in the capacity of nurse to the Federal Army. Intensely Union, she had laid aside pleasure and pursuits of vast wealth to aid a cause in which she so devoutly believed. The interviews between these two had been frank and unconventional. In fact, many a pleasant hour had been whiled away in strolls and conversation, when her presence at the hospital was in less urgent demand. He knew it was a brother's place he occupied in her affections, and despaired of ever awakening a deeper feeling. Still, she was his dream, and he was quite content to be near her. During these four years he had left her many a time to go and look silently at a soldier, the soldier known among his regiment as Achilles—Achilles, always at the forefront in battle, and always unscathed. The regiment had given him this name; but they came to like him, one and all. At first he did not mingle with them. His life was quiet and retiring. The rough-and-ready soldiers, thinking him proud, were at first prejudiced against him. But after the battles were fought, the man, with a scar upon his neck and cheek, denied himself the respite, earned by the toil of battle, and lingered among the wound-

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ed, saving many a poor fellow's life by his tireless efforts. He was tender as a woman, unselfish and brave, and the prejudice gave way imperceptibly to a feeling of reverence and respect.

The colonel of the regiment was killed, and the soldiers were permitted to choose his successor. With one accord, Achilles was chosen. He thanked the boys for the compliment, and assured them that he should endeavor to deserve their confidence. It was all simply done. There was no elation, no change of conduct. As private soldier, or as officer, he was still the same. Cool and fearless, the soldiers placed unlimited faith in him. In less than six months his regiment became known as one of the best-drilled and among the bravest in the service.

The Duke of Berwick gazed upon this man with feelings of love and hate; this man who held the heart he prized; this man, whose life he could not comprehend, was loved by the woman, also, whom he loved, but could not comprehend. In obedience to some inexplicable impulse, he followed in the wake of Edward Reynolds. He was on the James River, in the Army of the Potomac. Wherever Reynolds went, he went. It was fascination, or fate; perhaps both.

"If he should die, would she come to me?" Night after night he would ask himself this question in his sleep. "If he should fall, how would

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it affect her?" In his waking hours he would cast such questions from him. In self-reproach against such guilty thoughts, he increased his labors. At last, the war was drawing to a close. The man, whose footsteps he had seemed to haunt, had escaped without a scratch.

The battle of the Wilderness was in progress. A heavy rain the night before delayed the disposition of the Federal Army, and active hostilities were not commenced until late in the day. The Duke of Berwick, note book in hand, stood on a slight elevation overlooking the field, his pencil moving rapidly over a paper tablet in the preparation of despatches.

"In the valley a square is forming," writes the correspondent, glancing from the plains below to the white blotter, "protected, by the slight projection of a small hill, from the enemy's artillery. Lee rests upon his impregnable position, confident of ability to retain his ground against any assault that may be hurled against him. The strategic importance of the hill commanding the valley, and especially the plains, which the Union troops are to cross in order to attack the main lines, had not been realized by the Federal generals until after the enemy was fully entrenched in the commanding position. Two futile attempts have already been made to recover the hill, each effort being repulsed with heavy loss. The guns from the moun-

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tain peak will enfilade the Union Army as it crosses below; hence, at whatever hazard and sacrifice to life, they must be silenced. Colonel Reynolds has been intrusted with the perilous commission of expelling the enemy, and turning the guns upon their present possessors. At any rate, he is to engage them so warmly as to concentrate the fire upon himself, while the main army is passing over the plains below.

"The generals of the two armies may be seen riding hither and thither, quietly giving commands. Soon the storm will burst in all the splendid fury of battle. The square, commanded by Reynolds, moves carefully near the point of the mountain and swings abruptly to the left, while the eyes of the soldiers follow the direction indicated by the sword of their intrepid leader. These brave men must cross eighty rods of meadow land, subjected to the fire of the enemy, without offering one opposing shot. There is nothing that tries the mettle of soldiers like being subjected to the fire of the enemy's guns without permission to return the compliment. This is especially true when the field is covered with the dead and dying of previous assaults. A momentary shelter is given the soldiers, when the base of the mountain is reached. Reynolds behaves nicely in crossing the meadow. He pauses at the foot of the hill to give the men a few moment's rest. Again the assault-

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ing column begin the ascent. Half-way up the mountain is a plateau commanded by the rebel guns. The Blues break into the clearing, and dash across, their ranks decimated by grapnel and shot. Here a steep declivity offers them another shelter from the deadly fire.

"The men are showing fatigue. Each understands for himself that the trying ordeal is yet in store; that yonder, where the last four hundred feet must be traversed, is open and that the assault must be attended with fearful carnage. Reynolds is as calm as though on dress parade. While crossing this last few hundred feet the main army will emerge and engage the enemy generally. One solitary gun is fired. It is the signal to advance.

"'Charge, and fire as you charge,' commands Reynolds, leading the way. The soldiers dash into the clearing, their appearance being welcomed by a fusilade of shot and shell. The boom of cannon reverberates among the hills. Men drop, but there is no seeming check. Again and again those guns ring forth their peal of death; again and again the gaps close up; but one-third of the men are back there on the plain and the plateau. Reynolds moves among his followers inspiring them by words and actions.

"The standard-bearer drops; another seizes the banner, bears it a few feet forward, and falls.

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Five hundred infantry rise and pour a murderous hail of lead into the advancing soldiers. That awful fire sways and staggers the lines. No valor can face such a storm of death. They waver.

“‘Charge bayonets!’ rings the clarion voice of Reynolds, and, seizing the standard, he springs forward in full view of his followers, mounts the embankment, waving the Stars and Stripes. In a moment, the soldiers crowd around him, and the clangor of swords and bayonets rises above the groans of the dying.

“Twice hurled back, thrice on top the ramparts with a wall of dead between the combatants. A cry splits the heavens. It is the shout of victory! The enemy has broken! At this moment Reynolds, still holding the banner, staggers, slips from the earth embankment, and falls to the ground, the folds of the Flag winding about him. His trusty aids are bending over him.

“‘It is Achilles—Reynolds!’—

The tablet dropped from the writer’s fingers. What he had secretly hoped, or secretly feared, had come to pass. The Duke of Berwick leaned against an oak, oblivious of his surroundings. Thousands of cavalry dashed past him, but he heeded them not. Upon the plains below a demoralized army was in full retreat, but the tablet still lay upon the ground at his feet. He took heed neither of time nor of battle.

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At last, Alice is his. Omnipotence has taken the matter in charge, and decreed in his favor.

"Dead!" he repeated, with cold, white lips. "Dead! She loves him, but he is dead. I saw him fall back there."

He turned and mechanically advanced some paces down the hill.

"She loves him. He dies; she is free. My hands are innocent of his blood." He continued down the hillside, picking his way among the rock and the stubble. "She loves him."

"MURDERER!"

The lips of the dying men seem to breathe the accusation against him. The words greet him in the shouts, the confusion, the chaos from the plains below.

"MURDERER!"

The sparks, flying from the hoofs of galloping horses, were formed in the awful word. He pressed his hands against his temples.

"She loves him. Murderer, in the greatness of her heart, read the baseness of thine." With the swiftness of thought, he rushed back.

"Reynolds!" he shouted, "Reynolds!"

He ran, peering into the faces of the dead and dying. Nearer came the sound of horses' feet, that would trample upon the dead and crush the wounded.

He turned over the faces of the dead and looked

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at them in the uncertain light. Someone moaned. The searcher hastened toward the sound, and tore the flag from the form—peered into the face—shuddered. Without a word, he raised the wounded man in his arms and fled.

He was ever moving. On, on! "She loves him!"

His arms were numb, and he staggered under the weight of the burden. Once, in the night, Reynolds rallied and begged for water. A canteen had been placed to his lips, and the last drop drained. The first gray streaks of morning were lifting the pall of darkness from the earth, when a man, bearing a dead or wounded comrade, reeled against the door of the Union hospital.

"What is wanted?" asked a sweet voice from within.

The man's lips and throat were parched, and he spoke, or gasped in gutturals, resembling no known language. The door opened, and Alice, raising a lighted candle above her head, gazed in horror at the faces of the two men.

"It—is—he! Water—wa—ter!"

The Duke of Berwick had borne Edward Reynolds five miles over rocks, across gullies and ravines, through tangles of vines and underbrush to lay him at the feet of the woman they both loved.

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CHAPTER XXX.

"Well, sir," exclaimed the surgeon, dropping the arm he had just been examining, "I call that a good job. Do you know, I wouldn't have given you a shin-plaster for that arm," indicating the member referred to, "upon the morning that newspaper chap deposited you on the hospital floor."

"Opinions differ as to values. It is far better than no arm," replied Reynolds, swinging it carefully.

"'Better than no arm'! Guess it is. It will fill a coat-sleeve yet," commented the surgeon. "It was a close shave, though. We had the tools ready to do some amputating, when that nurse appeared. Jingo! But she is a woman, I tell you! You see, you had bled pretty nearly to death, besides being hauled about all night on the back of that press fellow, before we made your acquaintance. We weren't in the best of humor, not having been asleep over an hour when dragged out, and were not standing much on ceremony. In less than a trice, we saw what there was to be seen, and were putting the shirt back, when she walked in and interfered with the plans. Of course, she knew what we were up to.

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“‘Gentlemen,’ says she resolutely, ‘that arm can be saved.’

“‘I beg your pardon, madam,’ says the operating surgeon, dipping the knife into the antiseptic bath.

“‘Gentlemen,’ she repeats, ‘that arm *must* be saved.’

“Well, the old surgeon looked at her, and I began to fumble around in the bullet-hole among the broken bones, awaiting developments.

“‘Let me see,’ says she. And she took a long look at the horrible wound, turning paler than a ghost. ‘I wish a word with you in private,’ says she to my superior, leading him aside.

“After a bit they came back, and we went at our work. But your arm is there, thanks to that nurse, and a more skilful job was never done in the service. A month later my superior shoved a purse, containing a thousand gold dollars into my fist.

“‘Eh?’ says I.

“‘It’s all right,’ says ne; ‘we earned it.’ And we did, too. One or the other of us stood over you for the next ten days.”

“Do you know what amount the nurse paid?” inquired Reynolds, looking dreamily out of the window at the distant hills.

“He never reported. He’s close as an oyster, that sly fellow! Loves money to beat the cars,

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but clever with the instruments—mighty clever. His like isn't in the service."

"Can you learn what he received? Work upon his cupidity. Tell him I'll double it," suggested Reynolds.

"Perhaps, I'll see. Good-bye. Move the arm a little, off and on; it will do it good. May hurt a trifle at first, but keep it up several times a day."

"Never mind, I'll follow instructions. Say, you'll find out, won't you?"

"It depends. Good-bye," and the assistant darted away on the round of his visits.

"So I am to thank Alice for this, such as it is," mused Edward. "I must refund the money to her."

He remembered how she had come to sit by him, during those critical days when he was too weak to speak. He remembered how, as she sat by his couch, he had tried to find the face of the happy girl in the sweet, sad one of the woman that watched o'er him those days when the surgeon came so often to his bedside. Even the voice was changed. It was lower and more musical. But the happy laugh, the light-hearted, merry laugh, that fell in the olden days in ripples from those lips, had departed, leaving only the trace of a smile that went with every word or whisper. Yet, he had thought the brow clearer and whiter, the eyes deeper and purer, and the golden hair, of

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which he had been so proud, still waved, as it was wont to do, about the temples of that regal head. He had remembered of wondering, too, if it ever occurred to her that it was she who had robbed him of life's greatest happiness, and if in her heart she had no regret, no remorse for what she had done. Then came the long, wretched days when she did not come. And, finally, he had asked for the nurse, for Alice, and they had answered him that she had gone away; that she had asked to be transferred. He remembered how tired he was of life, and how he had wished, as he lay there day after day, gazing at the chair where she had sat, that the piece of shell had found his heart instead of his arm. It was doubly hard to bear—the thought that the Duke of Berwick had saved his life, and Alice had saved his arm. If they only knew how little he prized the salvage they had rescued! Of all the men in the world, that the Duke of Berwick should have carried him about that hideous night! He was in honor bound! It was best she had gone. Still, he must return the money. So the days and weeks went by, and he was strong upon his feet again. A furlough was placed in his hands, and the surgeon told him to go to Boston or New York until he recuperated. They would not take him back into the service, where he begged to go, and at last he was on his way to the Metropolis. Time dragged heavily

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upon his hands. He moped about objectless, hopeless. One day he met a brother officer, who, like himself, was laid up for repairs.

"What do you do to amuse yourself?" asked his acquaintance.

"Nothing," replied Reynolds.

"Take in the theater, of course?"

"Once or twice."

"Booth is billed to-night. Let's go."

"Very well."

The following day they were walking along Wall Street. A crowd of men were standing before the Stock Exchange.

"Ever speculate?" asked the friend.

"Never have."

"Let's go in and look around."

"Very well."

Two hours after, Edward Reynolds had lost five hundred dollars. Twenty minutes later, he had forgotten the circumstance entirely. A week afterwards, he was passing, alone, and recognized the place. He stopped, went in and made five hundred. He was even and would quit gambling. He wrote asking to be taken back into the service and received a reply to report six weeks hence. That message was received the 27th day of February, 1865. He had met no one he knew, save the brother officer, who was only in the city a day or two. He had no appetite. Instead of

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improving, he was in a steady decline. Ah, well, he would visit Wall Street again. He, at least, had forgotten while there. He cleared five hundred on the stocks of one road, lost five hundred on another. As he walked away the confusion and excitement clung to him tenaciously. For the first time, that night he began to think it over. It was a diversion. It was forgetfulness, and he would purchase that forgetfulness for the one month, until he joined his regiment, let it cost him what it may. Afterwards, he went regularly to the 'Change, his rather tall, athletic figure becoming familiar to the habitues. He developed into a genius, winning day after day. Hundreds at first, thousands, and then tens of thousands. Fortunatus seemed to stand at his elbow. His operations became prodigious. He was in the Stock Exchange, where fortunes are made and lost in a single day, when the door suddenly burst open, and a shout rang out, electrifying the inmates, "LEE HAS SURRENDERED!"

That night he was a multi-millionaire. He felt no remorse, no regret. He had found the key admitting of retreat from his own gloomy thoughts. When he closed that door, the shadows were locked without. He had no plans for the future. His life was without object. It had never occurred to him that he was gambling; never entered his mind that other men were ruined by his success.

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One morning he heard the members talking upon entering the building.

"Sad about Charley," said one.

"He was as clever and whole-souled a fellow as ever lived," replied another.

"Poor Charley! He passed me upon leaving the Exchange, talking to someone gayly. I knew he had lost heavily, and wondered at his cheerfulness."

"They say his mother and sister are nearly frantic with grief. They were dependent upon him. Sad affair! The bullet went straight through his heart. I was in a moment to look at him. You could almost expect him to smile and speak to you. Poor Charley!"

"He was ruined by the South Western? We were all pinched and squeezed more or less. It was another of the schemes of——"

The speaker, glancing up, saw Reynolds listening to the conversation, and stopped suddenly. The other looked about to learn the cause of interruption, when the two men walked away.

A man had committed suicide. There was nothing uncommon or startling about that circumstance in itself. The papers are picked up scarcely a morning without reading, in glaring headlines, one or more suicides. In some cities there are *felo de se* clubs. Self-destruction is quite a fad. Reynolds watched the two men mov-

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ing away. He had done nothing underhanded; abused no one's confidence; betrayed no trust. Why should they blame him for Charley's death? He remembered Charley well, and had liked his frank, open face. But, then, everybody liked Charley. He had such a super-abundance of vitality and magnetism. Others walked past him, talking of Charley, one repeating the words to which he had listened before, "The bullet went straight through his heart."

Reynolds changed his mind. He would return to his rooms. As he leisurely wheeled about, someone staggered against him.

"Beg pardon," said the man mechanically, making a wider detour.

"Why, halloo, Freeman," exclaimed Reynolds, his face brightening.

The man addressed was the subordinate surgeon, who had assisted in the operation upon his arm.

"Beg pardon," repeated the man vacantly, staring at Reynolds in a blank and dazed way, renewing his efforts to pass.

"Don't you remember me?" inquired Reynolds.

The physician looked fixedly at the questioner, without either intelligence or recognition.

"I am Reynolds, the one whose arm you saved."

There was something in the word Reynolds that seemed to rouse the surgeon from his apathy, and

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he began to look at the possessor of that name with a new light shining in his eyes.

"So you are the man who ruined me? Well, it's all in the game. I cherish no resentment. We are all here for that purpose. It's hell—this place! You picked me clean off my feet. I haven't a dollar in the world—Maggie's money and all. If I had taken the poor girl's advice!"

Edward Reynolds began to see himself in a new light.

"How great are your losses?" asked Reynolds.

"Ten thousand, Maggie's three thousand—thirteen thousand. Men like you, sir, only increase the distemper among the less fortunate. You make money—we learn of it, and bring our mite to the board and speculate. We see it disappear, and hope to retrench, and plunge deeper into the vortex. Someone arouses us with the sorcerer's word, 'ruined.' Then a new light begins to shine upon the situation. We see some master hand laying the lines and standing over the net, where we little fish are struggling. But, I repeat, sir, I hold no grudge," once more trying to pass.

"Swear to me that you will never again visit this place, and I will put you in a way to recover."

"What do you mean?"

"Go back, buy Pennsylvania and Erie up to ninety-six. Buy everything in sight. Wire your

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brokers in Washington and Boston to do likewise. Draw on me."

Freeman was wondering. "Why, sir," said he, "the Pennsylvania is short. No one is looking that way."

"Do as I say," repeated Reynolds; "but first, swear this day is the last."

"I give you my word of honor that I will never place my foot within the pit after to-day."

"Very well, go. I am at my room."

Reynolds walked away slowly. Later in the day he ordered a carriage and drove out in the country. He could not dispel the thought of his responsibility in the sad death of the suicide. Some laborers were gathering roots on a truck farm. He stopped and watched them at their labor. Then he got out of the buggy and, tying his horse, joined the workmen.

"Your vegetables are looking nicely." He spoke cheerfully.

"It's a bountiful harvest, but prices are dull; that is, it's a slow way of making money."

"Well, you look happy."

"Oh, yes, if it is a slow way of making money, sir," repeated the owner, "it is honest. We rob and ruin no one. No deaths at our door. See the crape yonder?" pointing at a house some twenty rods distant. "Charley Kline killed himself last night. That was his father's farm on the other

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side of the road, and his mother and sister live there, where we see the crape. They say a fellow by the name of Reynolds did the job. A fellow with a scarred—ah! beg your pardon, sir,” for the first time noticing the neck and cheek of the stranger; “meant no offense.” But the apology was lost on the man for whom it was intended.

“He’s a funny duck,” commented the truck-grower to his companions. “Guess he has forgotten something, by the way he is going back.”

“Looks that way,” admitted one of them.

“I pretty nearly got my foot in it about the scar.”

“Well, he did turn color.”

“Did you notice his cheek and neck?”

“Yes; he must be dreadful sensitive.”

“I was sorry, but they do say that ‘Reynolds’ is a devil.”

Reynolds hastened back to his rooms. There was one burden upon his mind—to make restitution—to undo the wrong he had done. He would have parted with every dollar he possessed if he could have restored life to that dead man. It was monstrous, the life he had been living. And yet, he was innocent. He had simply purchased forgetfulness. He had not dreamed, much less thought, that his actions meant ruin, misery, and death to others; that he had left victims, not only with smoking revolvers in their hands, but broken

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homes, and broken hearts in rural districts, with crape clinging to the doors. His life for the last few months stood before him in bold relief. And, as he analyzed his feelings, as he searched for the cause of his conduct, he half fancied that he heard a woman's words, "Make another fortune, you can do it."

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CHAPTER XXXI.

Edward Reynolds, after an absence of fifteen years, was once more in the city of his birth. He half expected to meet, running to welcome him, the boys with whom he had parted many years ago. Boys long since grown to be busy, active members of the professions and commercial world. Even the city had changed. He walked the length of Market Street, peering into the faces of pedestrians, trying to recognize some friend of his boyhood. Once or twice he fancied he saw familiar features, to be disappointed by closer scrutiny, while the name of some boy was held back from the half-opened lips.

It is sad to come home and no one to welcome us. Sad to hold in sacred memory the home of our childhood, to return and find none but strangers. No one is entirely cosmopolitan. Edward went to the cemetery and stood with uncovered head at the graves of his father and mother. Fresh flowers had been placed in the marble urn by someone, while two rose-bushes, growing upon either side of the mounds, were in white blossom. They had been placed there by loving hands—whose? Someone remembered, even though the

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son had forgotten. It was, undoubtedly, the St. Clairs, and he would not forget to thank them. After passing some hours by these silent resting-places, he thoughtfully returned to the city. Then he went out upon the street again and walked among the crowd, until he reached Ninth Street, when, turning to the right, he continued to Ridge Avenue, which he followed to Broad. The long walk did him good. He was nearing his father's house; across the street, in fact, was the residence of the Richardses. How natural it looked in the gathering twilight! He stood on the opposite side of the street, making mental note of the doors and windows, of the polished columns, the trees, the lawn, and the vines. All were the same he held in memory. That house was, in a sense, the first familiar face he had met. And the doors, and the windows, and the polished columns, the trees, the lawn and vines, seemed to be greeting him through the departed years. Even the marble steps were the same—the steps his feet had mounted hundreds of times to meet Alice, when his heart was young and hopeful.

At last he stood before the home of his childhood. He was born in that big house. The happiest days of his life were passed under that roof. The laughter of children was welcoming him. Already the building was illuminated with blazing lights. He half expected to see his father and

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mother moving about in the brilliantly lighted rooms. A happy, girlish voice called the children, and then, swinging into view, came the merry group with clasped hands, rollicking across the piazza.

"Be careful, children, and not fall," some one admonished from within, sounding much as a voice he remembered long ago. It was someone's else home. His approach would blight the mirth and the gladness issuing from the laughing throats. He was seized with a sudden desire to escape. He should break down upon crossing the threshold. The wanderer turned and walked away swiftly, with a mist dimming his sight. Another burst of merriment from the little folk added speed to his steps. Oh! there is something so unspeakably sad and cruel in being chased from one's own home by the laughter of unknown children; something so unspeakably pitiful in having neither kith nor kin in the whole wide world.

He returned to his hotel and sought his room, assuring himself that on the morrow he would have more courage, and should go back and meet the St. Clairs, visit the old familiar rooms once more, linger among the grounds, and then—well, then, away towards England.

It was late the following morning when Edward awoke, after a restless night. There were three things he had planned to do: First, to visit

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the St. Clairs; second, to make provision for the mother and sister of Charley Kline; and third, and last, to return to Alice the sum she had paid the army surgeons. He would execute the plan in the order named. True, there was no great haste; any time during the day would answer. It was three o'clock in the afternoon before he found himself preparing to set forth.

The hotel clerk entered the room with a couple of letters, and withdrew. Each bore a foreign postmark. He opened the smaller one and glanced at the superscription. It was from Miss Rivers.

"Five long years," he read, "since I have heard from you. I more than half begin to think I never may have heard but for the return of the Duke of Berwick. He called last evening, greatly improved in appearance. He tells me you have cleared millions in the Stock Exchange, whatever that may be. I cannot forego the pleasure of sending congratulations.

"When shall you come to England? The duke says you are the hero of many a battlefield, quite equal to the fables of King Arthur's Round Table. I always knew you were brave, and may I not feel proud of deeds that have endeared you to your countrymen?

"Papa was delighted to learn of your rapid

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fame and prosperity. Perhaps papa and I shall visit America in a few months. Write me.

“As ever,

“LENA RIVERS.”

“P. S.—The duke hints of a marriage to take place soon in America. He would not tell me the particulars. It is his own, of course.”

The reader held the letter a long time in his hand, pondering its contents. Then, picking up the large envelope and seeing the armorial crest of the Howes, he broke the seal, finding another envelope and a note. On the enclosed envelope was written, in the well-remembered handwriting of his departed friend: “To be delivered to Edward Reynolds after my death.”

The contents of the note were as follows:

“To Edward Reynolds.

“Esteemed Sir:—In making some disposition of my private papers this A. M., preparatory to an extended absence from England, I found the accompanying envelope accidentally. I cannot explain how it has escaped previous discovery. I deeply regret that the package has been misplaced and overlooked, and hope that no inconvenience shall have resulted to you in consequence of the delay. If there is anything I am directed to do in the letter, you can write Mudge & Co., Barris-

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ters, London, and they will communicate with me. when I shall endeavor to act with such promptness as to repair in a measure the unfortunate and greatly regretted delay of my grandfather's request.

"Your obedient servant,

"LORD ROYAL HOWE."

Then opening the other letter he read:

"My Dear Son Edward:—An old man may thus be indulged to address one in whom he enjoys the affections of such a relation, without fear of giving affront. You will think this post-mortem communication a strange one, undoubtedly. Still, as you proceed, you will find ample reasons for its delivery.

"I learned your sentiments toward Alice Eldridge while in America. Much in your life, for which I had not been able to account, was cleared up by that discovery. I sympathized with you very deeply, without intruding upon your privacy. I even brought about your meeting with Miss Rivers, hoping that her beauty and goodness would lure your heart from its unhappiness. But I had my labor for my pains.

"My dear Edward, you love the most incomparable woman of the world. There are none like her—none; and she loves you. She has always loved you. I was blind, too, and twitted her of ruining your life. You remember the clipping

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with dark spots. Those stains were made by blood from wounds I mercilessly inflicted in her true, noble heart. When you were sick in Switzerland, Alice, her father, mother, and Countess Ratcliff took shelter in the house of Landowner Bonner, where you were confined. She learned of your presence there, and that the doctors had given you up to die. I saw her kneeling by your bed, pouring out her heart to your deaf ears, and begging forgiveness. Then the London doctor came. Your life depended upon the operation of venesection. The man, brought from the city for the purpose, failed at the last moment; but I did not know it, until, entering your room, I saw the blood flowing from her body into yours—your right arm and her left one lying side by side, connected with a tube through which the life-blood was passing. You began to improve at once, and the following day but one they went away. But she bribed the nurse and made me swear that I would never tell you while I lived. Death relieves me of my promise, and I am resolved you shall know. She thinks that your happiness depends upon silence.

“She broke faith with you once, but I tell you she loves you, has always loved you! I heard her confess it, as she knelt by your side, when she believed you were dying. As you were delirious, you made her wear the old engagement-ring, and would take no medicine or nourishment for three

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long weeks except from her hand. You lavished upon her the incoherent wealth of your heart, and she, so white and faint under the lash and stripes of the torture. If you are married upon receiving this, burn the letter; if you are free and love her still, I shall sleep more peacefully in the grave, if the dead are permitted to have knowledge of the living, in knowing that the truest woman of the world, whose heart is imbued with the gifts of angels, is united with the one man whom she has ever honored with her love.

“LORD ALFRED HOWE.”

Great drops of perspiration formed upon his forehead as he continued to read. Slowly he picked up the other one, his white lips reading aloud the postscript: “The duke hints of a marriage soon to take place in America. He would not tell me the particulars. It is his own, of course.”

Edward rose and pushed the hair back from his brow. There was a look in those eyes that must have been a triumph for the fiends of hell to behold. He cast off his coat and cuffs, and pulled back his shirt-sleeve, and stared at the scar below the elbow.

“It was she I saw that night with the lamp. It was Alice, my life! my love!”

Then he raised the other sleeve to the shoulder and looked hard at the fresher scars made by the fragment of shell and the surgeon’s knives.

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“Great God!” he breathed, “I need them both: one, to remind me of Alice, and the other, of the man that bore my insensible weight about that awful night. By God! the Duke of Berwick shall never have cause to regret that noble act, little as I have to thank him for it. There is strength in those two scars to reconcile me to my future life.”

He would go and pass one single hour in the shade of the trees of the old home. That would be enough. He could enter from the rear unobserved. No one would see him. He would sit in the seat where his father and mother had sat hand in hand and watched him play in his boyhood; then he would go, once more a fugitive from himself. It was nearly four o'clock when he passed through the doors of the hotel upon the street. Half an hour later he had succeeded in gaining access to the secluded grounds in the rear of his home. He needed the solitude. The quiet and stillness soothed his excitement. Once or twice he heard children playing near the house, but they had gone elsewhere. How well he remembered every tree and path! St. Clair had been faithful to his trust in having taken splendid care of the premises. He wondered if Alice ever came and walked under the trees, and rested upon the rustic benches, out of the heat and glare of the sun. Involuntarily he placed his hand in his

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pocket for the letter, with an impulse to read it over once more; he pulled it from his pocket to destroy it. That letter should be no Nemesis to pursue him. He took the envelope by the extreme corners—was that a footstep? He listened—no. He looked, saw no one, and tore the envelope and contents lengthwise—'twas the step again, soft, like the step of the dead. He shivered. The superstition was gaining that he had conjured up the spirit of the dead. Ah, no. It was someone. He saw a woman's skirt. It was so close he could almost touch it. Then he rose and stood looking into eyes that were looking back at him.

"Edward—you here!" her hands locking and unlocking convulsively.

"Alice! Alice!"

There are impromptus of the heart.

"You frightened me."

"You surprised me." Both laughed.

"Welcome home," extending her hand, self-possessed again.

He took her small white hand within his own a trifle unsteadily.

"Thank you. I shall ever remember that after a banishment of sixteen years you are the only one to welcome me." She withdrew her hand.

"Haven't you seen the St. Clairs?"

"No, I came in the back way." She was watching him again.

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"Did I disturb you?"

"Oh, no."

"I pass much of my time with the St. Clairs. I supposed them in the park. They will be glad to see you."

"Do you think so?"

"They and the children are always talking of your home-coming."

"The children!"

"Two boys and two girls. Alice, the eldest, is nearly fourteen."

"Time has dealt kindly by you," taking an inventory of her features.

"I am glad you think so."

"What a jumbled up thing life is, isn't it?"

"Sometimes."

"Do you remember the conversation we once had about the 'two worlds?' " Alice made no reply. "I want you to know," he continued, "that all the happiness my life has known comes from the world I then despised."

"I misjudged you," she faltered.

"And the thought that I have lived, trying to bring those 'two worlds' nearer together must be some comfort to the little girl that gave me my first object lesson."

"And that girl," cried Alice, passionately, going to the side of the man and catching his hands, her eyes shining, her face illumined, "long since

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grown to womanhood, honors and reveres that noble man." She did not heed the pain of fingers crushed in those strong hands, her gaze did not waver before the face across which tides, dashed by lightning and storm, were swaying.

There is a limit to endurance. Edward Reynolds held her hands, ah! and he would drag her to his breast, resist if she would, struggle if she would, and hold her there one brief moment of time and then—a tinge of pain darted through the wounded shoulder.

HONOR!

Edward flung the hands from him and staggered backward.

Alice turned and walked away. She had drawn aside the mask of womanly reserve and he had cast her off.

"Mrs. Eldridge," Edward said overtaking her. "You will not mention my presence to the St. Clairs."

"Certainly not, if you wish it so." She was moving on again, then she paused to ask:

"Will you not come into the house? It will soon be dark."

"Yes, it will soon be dark," he answered, "but my life has had a glorious sunrise—a golden sunset." He stood in the path with outstretched hand.

"Good-bye, Alice; I leave to-night."



“No”! He Had Tortured Her Enough

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"To be gone——" suddenly pausing. What did it matter to her?

"I return to England."

"'England'—good-bye."

A ray of sunlight burst through the leaves and rested upon the hands. Together they glanced through the break, made in the foliage by a gust of wind, at the western sky. The cross of a church divided the sun. As suddenly the sky was obscured, the breeze passed, the leaves fell back in repose.

"Alice, we made a mistake."

"Perhaps."

"We are parting, Alice, forever."

"Yes, I know."

"You saved my life in Switzerland——"

"Ah!" She shrank from his words.

"May I see your arm?"

"No!" he had tortured her enough.

"Not so fast, Alice. Once you told me your happiness required a great sacrifice of me, and I gave you your freedom. We shall never meet again. If you come to England to live with your husband——"

"'My husband'——"

"—I will go elsewhere. England and Egypt are the same to me. The Duke of Berwick and I could not breathe in the same Hemisphere. But the future wife of an English nobleman would

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give her husband no right to question the last parting grace of suffering lips to touch that sacred scar—that record of the suppliant's life. Still, if you believe your engagement denies the bestowal of such privilege, we can part and——”

“*My husband——*”

—“know that memories of an unavailing past are buried deeper among the ruins of the heart, over which sleepless vigils forever guard. Alice, no man ever missed the highest consummation of life, if that man loves the truest and best of women. There is peace in the very unrest; strength in the shattered joys; happiness in the ethereal presence. Love is the Deity that reigns omnipotent, supreme. We met without design; we part conscious of no wrong. If the Duke of Berwick stood by our sides, we could do no more—farewell.”

“*Edward!—no—no——*”

“Alice!” It was the cry of the heart.

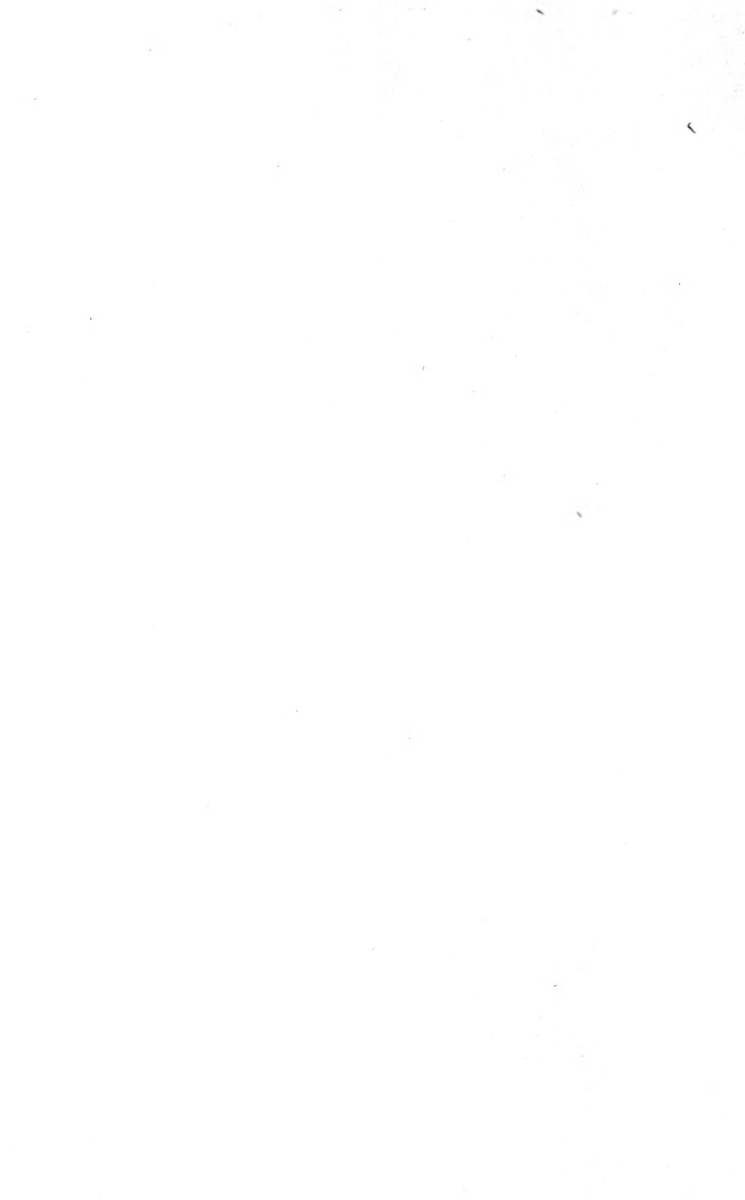
Then two trembling hands took her face and held it so their eyes met, and the light of two souls passed into understanding, even as the gathering shades of night stole upon and enveloped them—that inextinguishable light—burning eternal upon the altars of the throne of God.

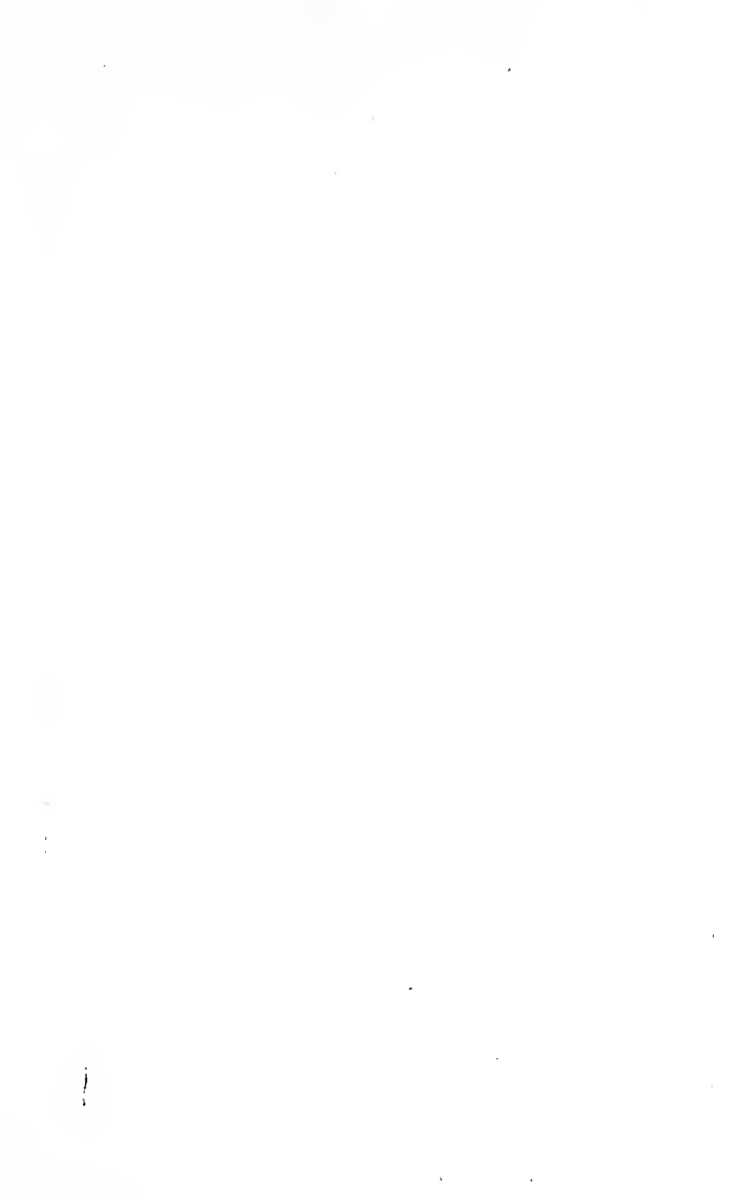
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The Duke of Berwick owns an unfinished painting of his wife. “Painted seven years before our

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marriage," he explains to his friends, "by Michael Lieb, the painter of 'Renaissance.' The Duchess and myself never discuss the tragic death of the artist."





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